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THE EAST

東

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The Concept of Ninjo in the Economic Life

Shotoku Taishi—A Man of All Seasons

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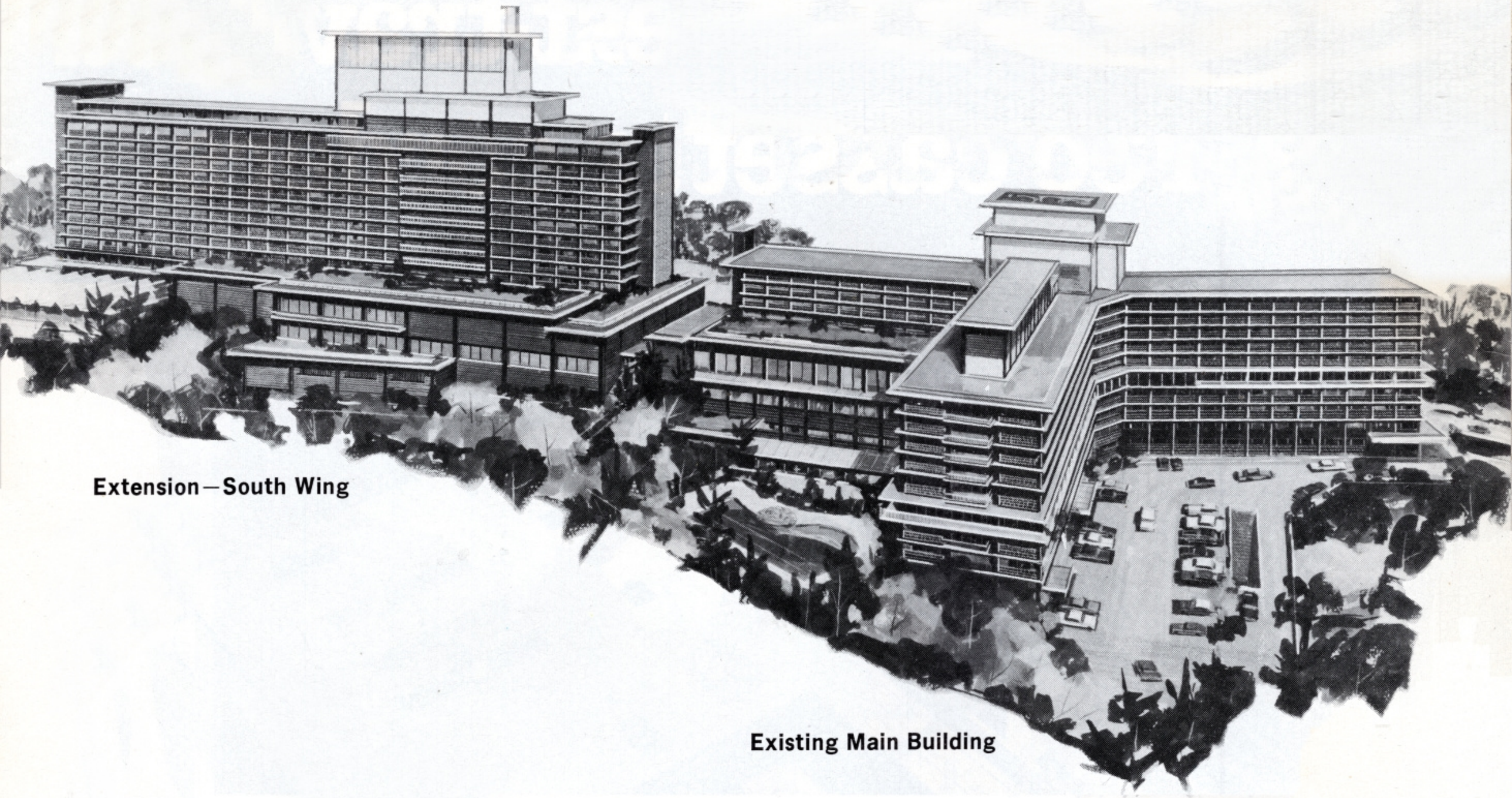

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THE EAST

COVER

In ancient India, the *rimbō* 輪宝 (treasure in the shape of a wheel) was originally a weapon that was thrown, and is believed to have been one of the seven treasures of the idealized Indian king Cakravarti-rāja. Legend says that at his enthronement ceremony, the king received a rimbō from the heavens and by turning it, he could conquer the world and govern truly and wisely.

In Buddhism, the Law (Dharma) preached by the Buddha destroyed and expelled the illusions of the people. In an allusion to the rimbō of Cakravarti-rāja, this is called *hōrin* 法輪, the wheel of the Law; the Buddha's sermons are thus referred to as the "turning of the wheel of the Law." The *Daichidoron*, a translation of an Indian commentary on the Buddhist scriptures, states, "The turning of the wheel of the Law is just like the turning of the treasure wheel of Cakravarti-rāja."

Today rimbō are made of gold, silver, copper and iron and exist in two shapes: one with blades protruding out and the other with blades standing in line along a circle in an octagonal shape. Brought to Japan from China by such esoteric Buddhist priests as Saichō and Kūkai, the rimbō has been used as a ritual implement in esoteric Buddhist rites. The rimbō is carved in a *Bussokuseki* (a stone footprint of the Buddha) at Yakushi-ji and is also used for the halos of the four dry-lacquered images of the heavenly kings in Taima-dera, both temples located in Nara Prefecture.

Furthermore, we can also see a rimbō flying through the sky in the second volume of the *Shigisan Engi Emaki*, or painted scroll of the Legends of Mount Shigi, said to have been painted in the twelfth century.

During the earliest period of Buddhism, this rimbō, along with the *manji* 卍 (svastika) symbolizing the radiant sun, was used as a design motif on Buddhist flags. Later, its form took that of a crest derived from esoteric and mountain Buddhist sects.

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CONTENTS

Topics

Enzyme to Control Instincts; A Specific Medicine for Leukemia; "Rip Van Winkle" Walnuts 8

Industrial Sociology

The Concept of Ninjō in the Economic Life of Japan ..... *Hazama Hiroshi* 10

Kanji

"The Brush of Mouse Whiskers" 14

Travel Diary

The Rugged Life of Chichibu 16

Kana

Iroha Cards 30

Fine Arts

The Exile of Tomo-no-Yoshio 32

Calendar Year

August 34

Natural Science

The Spirit Trees of Yakushima 39

History

Shōtoku Taishi—A Man of All Seasons ... *Yonekura Isamu* 47

Go for Fun - 4

Special Situations ..... *Stuart Dowsey* 62

Ryōri

Okinawan Style White Fish Meat with Vinegared Miso 65

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A WORD FROM THE PUBLISHER

The economic article in this issue, entitled "The Concept of *Ninjo* in the Economic Life of Japan," gives a straight forward and plain elucidation of "paternalism" in Japanese companies, from the standpoint of *ninjō*. Considering that it is far from easy to give a clear definition of *ninjō* in its connection with the social psychology of the Japanese people, I think this article is very interesting and quite unique.

As mentioned in the article, so many Japanese employees working in Western companies in Japan often resign from their jobs after only having worked a relatively short period of time. In relation to this, I recall what one of my acquaintances said about this subject in a previous conversation.

He retired from a certain big Western company in Japan when he reached the age limit. According to his description of the situation in his company, it took all of his will-power not to quit, before he did. In his case, most of the Japanese workers usually lost their patience before reaching the retirement age and initiated steps to resign when they felt they could not continue any longer. The reason for this, according to his interpretation of the situation, was that there was a tendency among the managing staff in such Western companies in Japan to interfere with the strong determination or intention of Japanese employees to work earnestly; that is, there was a basic lack of understanding between the foreign managing staff and the Japanese employees. For example, he felt that there was a trend among the management to keep competent Japanese workers at a distance if they could not speak English well, or he thought that the superiors only responded if they were patronized and flattered. He observed: "It was really unbearable to me to think that such attitudes of the management staff might be preventing the company from producing a larger profit." Obviously my acquaintance is taking the abstract concept of corporate loyalty among employees as a means to judge "value", and what interests me in this connection is that he takes a typically Japanese way of thinking.

But is it fair to say that such high labor turnover as seen among Japanese employees in the Western companies in Japan can be attributed only to the problem of the quality of the management staff? There are also some Western companies in Japan which, taking good advantage of the corporate loyalty maintained among the Japanese employees, have achieved very satisfactory business results.

I am told that recently there have been some companies in the United States which have adopted a Japanese-style "paternalism" in the management of affairs, but it seems to me that to do so is no easy matter.

Strictly speaking, *ninjō* is one of the emotional features based on a concept of "dependence" in Japanese society. In order for it to exist, there has to be, in the first place, a close give-and-take relationship based on human kindness between those who approach other people and those who receive them. It is because of the warm human affections given by one person, which calls forth some response in another person's heart, expressed in Japanese as *jō ga kayou*, that the former is willing to extend kindness to the latter, or *ninjō o kakeru*, in Japanese. I wonder if the Western way of individualism based on the concepts of rights and duties and of written contracts can coexist with the typical Japanese theory of *ninjō*. Is it possible to so easily fuse such different concepts of different cultures into one?—In other words, if the Japanese concept of *ninjō* is adopted by foreign people, but so long as "paternalism" is essentially considered as only a means, then ninjō does not accurately operate in the real sense and only becomes an instrument rather than the central concern. It will be quite easy to argue on the backwardness of Japanese society where social morality accessible to paternalism is deeply rooted. But I believe we must consider human relations in society from larger as well as wider viewpoints.

As mentioned above, at the root of various human relations in Japanese society lie friendly feelings or affectionate kindness between specific individuals. This fact nō doubt constitutes the strength of Japanese society, but, on the other hand, when viewed from the standpoint of individualism, it is at the same time the weakness. 東

A Notice to Our Subscribers

When making inquiries or requests regarding subscriptions, your own or gifts for someone else, please be sure to indicate your subscription reference number. This will help us to facilitate things so that we can answer you without delay. Thank you very much.

The Subscription Department

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for your letter of May 1st in answer to mine of April 13th. Thank you for posting me KANJI KANJI. I look forward to receiving it. If the book is anything like the interesting Kanji articles in EAST it will be a treasure to own.

I have received all copies of East, the last being Vol. 9-3. I note with pleasure that you have posted Vol. 9-4 to me. I have written to Paul Flesch & Co. to enquire why my renewal has not been lodged with you. I posted them a cheque for subscription renewal in January. In the meantime please keep posting EAST to me as I do not wish to miss out on a copy.

It is a very topical magazine and I think it strikes a very even balance between the traditional and Modern Japan. It must do a good job in eradicating misconceptions about Japan.

I look forward to reading more articles on Japanese pre-history; Japanese education today . . . its schools and universities; Japanese agriculture and the revolution in farming methods and techniques; inside looks at the industries that have made Japanese products famous—perhaps a visit to a camera factory, shipbuilding yard, steelworks etc. etc. What about a look at fishing? And His Majesty the Emperor is a noted biologist and a specialist on certain types of marine life. I'd love to see something about his researches in your pages.

I'm trying to learn Japanese. How about a language corner . . . perhaps interesting stories in Kana introducing a few Kanji and vocabulary and essential grammar notes.

Perhaps my suggestions have been made before and are already planned to appear in future issues.

Thank you once again for your letter.

Yours
R. L. Roberts
British Solomon Islands

INFORMATION BOX

Q Dear Sirs,

I am student of Professor Kawai, Toshio teacher of Sumi-E, in Los Angeles, California. I have the opportunity to come to Japan in the fall of this year and I would like to be able to see how the brushes are made; the ones we use for painting.

I would appreciate it if you could put me in contact with any of the manufacturer's there. My teacher says that there are some in Nara and Tokyo, however I don't know any of the addresses.

Also, I would like to see the process of hand made paper.

If at some time in the future you could have an article on the art of Sumi-E, I would appreciate it very much.

I believe your magazine is the best I have seen, and really enjoy reading it from cover to cover.

Sincerely,
George Lobnow
1711-Carver St.
Redondo Beach, 90278
California, U.S.A.

A It is very good to hear that there are those who are studying Japanese arts with such enthusiasm in the United States. We are very glad to answer your inquiry about sumi-e. Concerning your request we advise you to get in touch with the following well known representative for sumi-e brushes. This outlet is known especially for its excellent quality and fine brush workmanship:

Heian-dō
Kudan
Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo

At this store one may select brushes and inks but it is not actually manufacturing the brushes on the premises. The store receives its finely made brushes from individual makers who prepare them one by one at their own homes. Although you cannot actually see the brushes being made here at this outlet perhaps you could go there and be advised how the brushes are made.

Q Please advise me how I can also order a similar book on Kana (p. 60 of Vol. IX No. 1 says "from Edo Iroha published by Shinsen-sha).

Mrs. Eleanor Woods

A "Edo Iroha published by Shinsen-sha" is not a book as you may have assumed but a set of cards. The cards come in a set of 48 with colorful, cut paper illustrations and the Kana with Edo period proverbial stories on each card. The price is 600 yen for the regular set with 140 yen for postage, and the special set of high grade paper is 4,000 yen plus 250 yen postal charges.

Please refer to the article in this issue under the title of "Kana" where you can learn about the origins and method of playing with the Iroha cards.

Please place your order for the Iroha cards through the following address:

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Wrong Dream

Even Confucious lamented that he had never met the Illustrious Ancient Chou Kung in a dream. But that did not stop one pretentious teacher from pronouncing after waking from a short snooze in class, "I just met with Chou Kung in a dream."

The next day he pounced on one of his pupils catching a few winks in the back and began to beat him with a rod. "What do you mean by sleeping in my class?!"

"I just met with Chou Kung in a dream," the student said predictably.

"Humph, you did, did you? How would *you* get to see Chou Kung in a dream?"

"I did, though," the boy insisted.

"Well," sneered the teacher, "and what did he say?"

"He said he'd never met *you*!" the student replied.

from Hsiao Tsan

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Topics

Enzyme to Control Instincts

NORMALLY, NOBODY can sit down at one sitting and eat the traditional three meals of one day, nor can anybody remain awake all night even if he has had more than sufficient sleep the day before. Also the average man cannot lead a nocturnal life in the daytime, nor can he adopt his daylight pattern of life to the late night hours. But you can do them now through the discovery of a new enzyme This comes as welcome news for those of us leading a very busy daily life. The enzyme in question has recently been discovered at the laboratory of Professor Hayaishi Osamu and his assistant Hirata Fusao of the Kyōto University Medical School's Department. Prof. Hayaishi is recognized as a world-famous authority on biochemistry.

The newly-discovered enzyme has a function to resolve serotonin or melatonin, a kind of hormone governing the feelings and sentiments, as well as the diurnal rhythm, of the higher animals, including human beings. It is tentatively named "new tryptophan pyrrolase". As a result of experimentation, Prof. Hayaishi and others found this enzyme in the brains, lungs and intestines of rabbits.

And from subsequent experiments, it was proved that in the brain this enzyme would resolve serotonin or melatonin. Melatonin, above all, is one of the important secretions which passes into the pituitary gland, where it governs the diurnal rhythm of the higher animals, covering all such instinctive acts as taking meals, sleeping, excretion, and perspiration. The resolution of melatonin will, therefore, greatly affect such acts; that is, by the degree at which it is resolved, the amount one eats at a meal or the number of sleeping hours, for example, can be controlled. In short, we are free to control artificially those acts by adjusting the quantity of this enzyme in the body. When further research makes it possible to crystallize this enzyme and it is developed as a medicine, it will come into wide use among people. Those who take it will become able to control freely both the durations of the daytime and the night; for example, they can go to bed any time they like and sleep as much as they please. Or, moreover, one can eat at one sitting as much as one likes, and get along for a while thereafter without taking any meals.

This research will be published at the meeting of the International Biochemistry Society to be held in Stockholm (Sweden) this July, but an excerption from it was sent to the Society beforehand and has already attracted the attention of biochemists all over the world.

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A Specific Medicine for Leukemia

RECENTLY A welcome report has been published that the National Cancer Center has newly developed an anti-cancer medicine named cyclocytidine which has already saved the lives of more than forty patients who had been suffering from leukemia or malignant lymphadenoma. A special research team headed by Doctor Kuretani Kazuo, Chief of the Pharmacology Division of the National Cancer Center, singled out cyclocytidine from among more than 800 different chemical compounds as a result of research carried on over a period of seven years. A cyclocytidine, a nucleic acid related compound derived from yeasts, is a safe, strong anti-cancer medicine free from harmful side effects.

Earlier, at a meeting of the Japan Pharmaceutical Society held in April 1972, an astonishing report announced that through animal experiments with

cyclocytidine, two-thirds of the mice suffering from leukemia were completely cured. Here was a possible breakthrough in cancer research that drew the attention of medical circles throughout the world. To ascertain the medicine's effect on human beings afflicted with cancer, in the spring of 1972 the National Cancer Center initiated clinical experiments in some forty hospitals located throughout Japan.

To date, patients who have so far been cured in the clinical experiments conducted at the National Cancer Center itself total eleven in all, including seven who had been suffering from leukemia and four who had been afflicted with lymphadenoma. The case of one adult woman deserves special mention. Suffering from acute medullary leukemia, she was hospitalized at the Center near the end of 1972. Twenty milligrams of cyclocytidine, given in twice a day in doses of ten milligrams each, was prescribed for her for fifteen days running. With this treatment, the multiplication of leucocytes suddenly stopped and the blood platelets which had been steadily decreasing began to increase and soon returned to normal. Several months of subsequent observation with the patient remaining in the hospital concluded that there was no fear of the disease's recurrence. This spring she left the hospital once again a healthy woman.

In addition to the above case, there have been ten other cases of complete recovery throughout the country. Adding to these eleven cases, others in which the cancerous cells have completely disappeared but where there remains some fear of recurrence, the total number of patients who have been cured by this new medicine cyclocytidine number over forty.

So far the medicine has been administered by injection, but depending on further research, oral prescription may become feasible. In the future it may become possible to drink a glass of juice with this medicine mixed in it, thus allowing cancer patients to be treated at home. The Kohjin Co., Ltd. (headquarters Tōkyō) holds the patent for the manufacture of the cyclocytidine and plans to apply for authorized approval to market it at the earliest possible date. Tentative scheduling places the medicine on the market by spring 1974 at the latest.

"Rip Van Winkle" Walnuts

THE STAFF OF the Municipal Science Museum of Nagaoka City in Niigata Prefecture some time ago excavated an archaic ruin of the Latter Jōmon Period (3,000–3,500 years ago) in Mishima of the same prefecture and there uncovered—some walnuts. These nuts were sown in a sand box to see if they might still able to germinate. Amazingly enough, young buds began to peep from the ground toward the end of April this year. The staff who are in charge of this experiment have been struck with reverent awe at the profound mystery of life.

When the dwelling cite of the latter Jōmon Period was excavated last year April, it was found that most of the vestiges had been carbonized except for fifteen walnuts that were sheltered in an earthenware vessel. They were well preserved, and their firm flesh indicated that a robust life still breathed within them. In the germination experiment conducted afterward, twelve of them budded out and have grown 15 centimeters in only one week, putting forth dainty young leaves. The secret behind such perfect preservation seems to lie in the peat layer that acted to shut out the air, forming a sort of air-tight chamber under the ground. These sprouting seeds, in any case, are anticipated to present some important clues as to eating habits in the Jōmon Period and the biological evolution of the walnut. The germination of water lily seeds two thousand years old has set the precedent, but this experiment is the first to succeed in resurrecting a nut plant.

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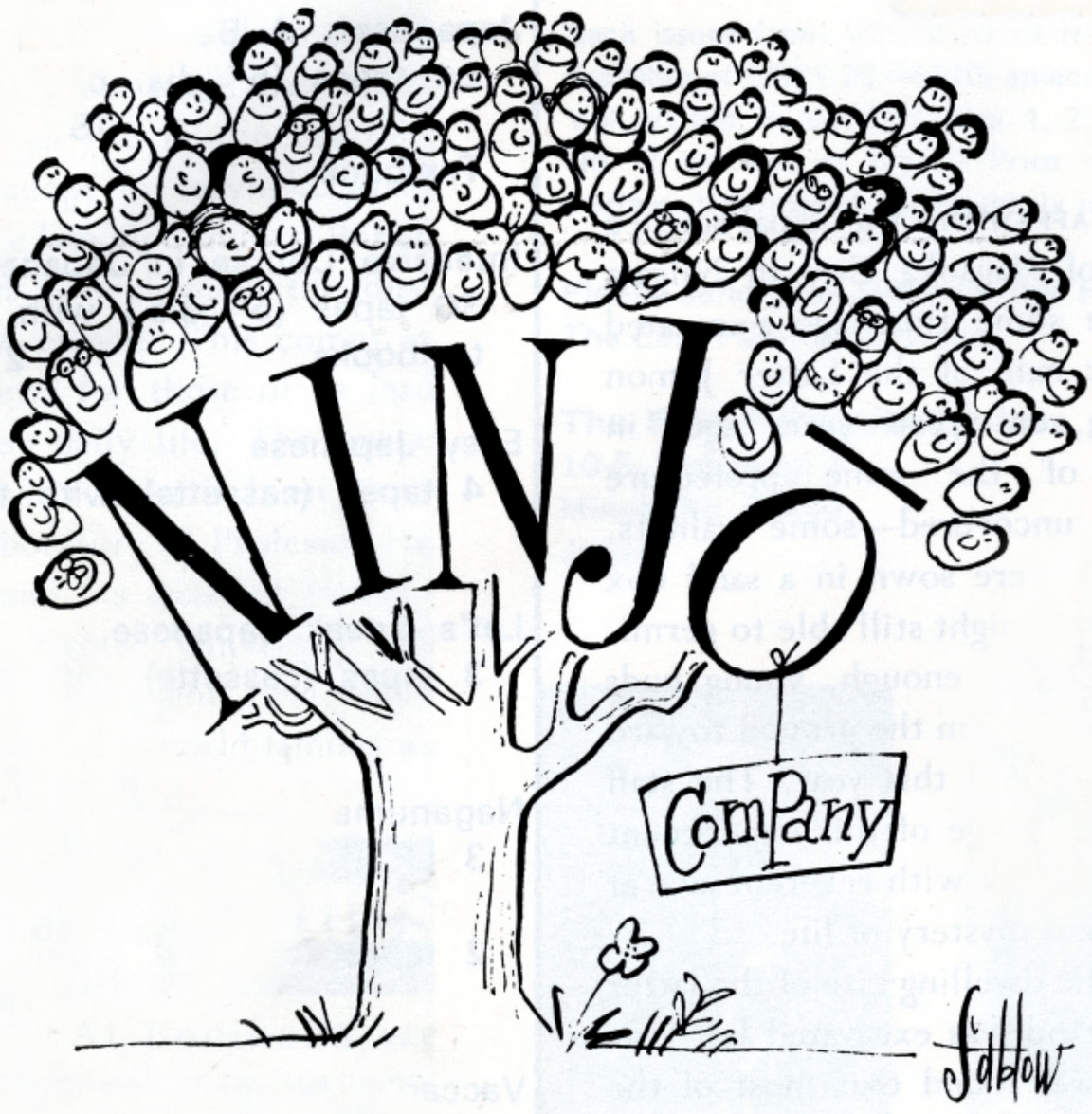
The Concept of Ninjō in the Economic Life of Japan

by Hazama Hiroshi



With the growth of international prosperity and economic exchanges throughout the world, many Western businesses have undertaken an active interest in Japan and have expanded their concerns there.

How do prospective Japanese employees evaluate the possibility of working for these newly opening firms?

Of course there are many Japanese employed in these firms, but there seems to be a tendency among many people to avoid working for a Western firm if at all possible. One evidence that this is true can be seen from the rather high labor turnover as compared to an average Japanese company.

In the West labor turnover has not generally been taken as a means to determine whether the evaluation of a company is superior or not, since withdrawl from a job is usually left up to the individual's will or the company decides to discharge someone. It is quite natural in the West to see a person leave a job because of personal dissatisfaction or he may leave because management has told him to do so.

Except under special or unusual circumstances a Western company is not held responsible for the rate of labor turnover within its ranks for whatever reason the people may have for leaving the firm.

At Western companies in Japan the high rate of labor turnover can be seen to apply not only to Japanese employees but also to foreign companies' nationals too.

As we mentioned above if we compare the record of labor turnover of Japanese employees working at Western companies in Japan to other home industries the difference is quite striking, but if a comparison were to be made of these Japanese employees and the foreign company's own home labor turnover then there may not be any detectable difference in the figures in the minds of the Western personnel directors. Therefore, the difference is based upon the Japanese scene rather than as a comparison of Japan and another country.

There is one basic reason for this large difference in labor turnover if one compares the foreign company in Japan to a domestic firm and that is that there is a tacit understanding among the employees of a Japanese company that no matter how dissatisfied they may be about the conditions of the company they will endure the situation without complaining even to the point of refusing to take the step of leaving the company.

This is also compensated for by the fact that management cannot casually fire them even if conditions take a turn for the worst in the company's fortunes.

The element which lies beneath this attitude on the part of both labor and management is the con-

sciousness of "groupism", which has already been mentioned in a former issue (Vol. IX, No. 4). The moving spirit behind this idea of groupism is that labor and management determine not to act self-centeredly, and always try to imagine themselves in the other's position in order to maintain a feeling of mutual assistance.

One result of this "mutual assistance" concept is that forcible retirement or dismissal of employees from a Japanese company is resorted to only in the most extreme cases.

In the Japanese context dismissal or involuntary retirement offer many more complicated repercussions than in the West. In recent years younger people have had less hesitation than their elders about "groupism" and are tending to resign from companies for their own personal reasons more often, but still there are more anxieties attached to the younger Japanese about taking such a step than their Western counterparts.

In Japan it is generally considered an important measure in judging the quality of a company by looking at their rate of labor turnover. This has a serious influence on the attitude of a prospective worker in any company.

Why do so many Japanese employees who have been working in Western companies in Japan often resign from their jobs after only having worked a relatively short period of time?

For one reason it can be said that Western management techniques sometimes precipitate the dismissal of some workers, but for the most part people are leaving their jobs voluntarily because of certain dissatisfactions with the foreign companies.

One of these dissatisfactions is that in many cases the top positions are held by foreigners who have been sent from overseas to staff the positions and as a result there is no possibility for the Japanese worker to move up into these jobs.

Another and more important criticism comes from the complaint that Western companies lack an atmosphere of *ninjō*, human feelings or a certain attitude of sympathetic forbeabance.

What exactly is this attitude of *ninjō*, and how is it identified? It is a word fraught with many nuances and the meaning varies according to the situations with which the word is employed.

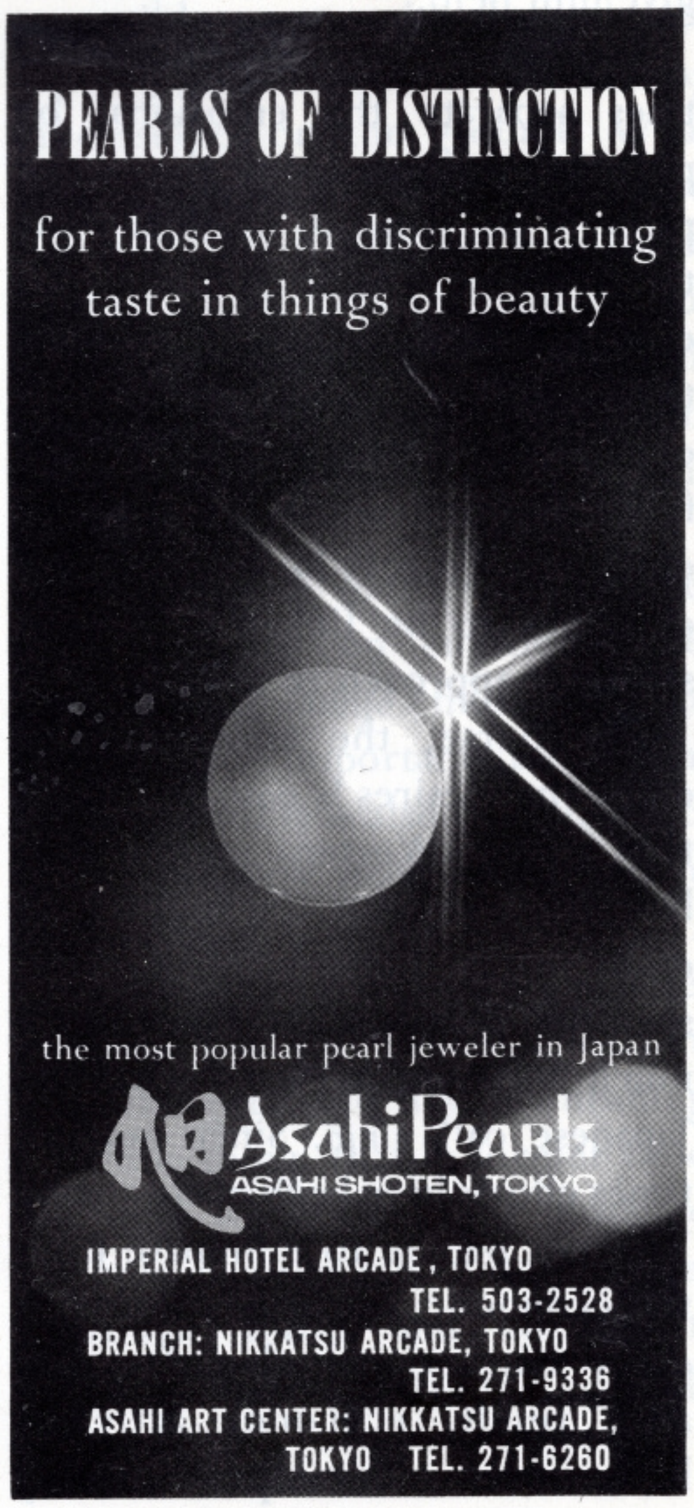
The definition of the word according to one of the most authoritative Japanese dictionaries the *Kōjien* says that *ninjō* is: " (1) Natural human affection, tenderness, and pity. (2) Human nature." This definition is probably too simplified for an exact understanding because the concept of *ninjō* combines many meanings which express subtle social overtones of affection, compassion, love, tenderness, pity, sympathy, and sensibility. When one person uses the word it may denote one specific nuance from the above possibilities, or whenever the word is used in an ordinary way there may be several meanings attached to its employment.

Among the Japanese there is a great emphasis upon this concept of *ninjō* in the course of considering human relations. If a person is accused of lacking this element in his relationships with others then it is absolutely one of the worst attacks that you could make upon his personality. To be spoken of as a man without *ninjō* in a business situation is worse than having someone call you an incompetent.

Ninjō is one of the primary elements that one searches for or at least counts on having when looking for a job in Japan. Often this consideration comes before the amount of salary which may be offered to one. Therefore, a Western company faces a tremendous barrier for attracting a talented Japanese staff if they are not satisfied with the atmosphere of the company based on the criteria of *ninjō*.

Western companies are often evaluated as lacking this important emotional element in their relations with Japanese workers. Some complaints by Japanese workers about their Western employers have been—"I took a two-week leave of absence from my job because of sickness and was fired because I could not achieve a satisfactory performance record." "Superiors keep a very strict check on our behavior, but never thank us for our services." "Colleagues never seem to be there when I need a helping hand".

When these complaints are given



they are said with the intention of showing the difference of approach within Japanese companies and the Western counterparts doing business in Japan in relationship to the employees' expectations concerning their emotional needs.

For example in a Japanese company, absence as a result of sickness would never lead to an unsatisfactory business record, nor would an employer think of using that as an excuse for firing someone.

It is expected that employers will treat the people under him with the loving kindness that a father might extend to his son, giving them praise in return for a job considered well done. The expression "thanks for a job well done!" can often be heard around a Japanese business office.

When an employee meets with difficulty it is considered an article of faith for his colleagues, sensing his distress, to go to his aid and give him help.

So often Western business practices separate the emotional or personal aspects from the work place in the name of efficiency but the Japanese employee cannot be expected to work happily without this high emotional gratification expectation concept being fulfilled. In other words the Japanese employee expects both wages and emotions to be linked in a constructive approach to his job.

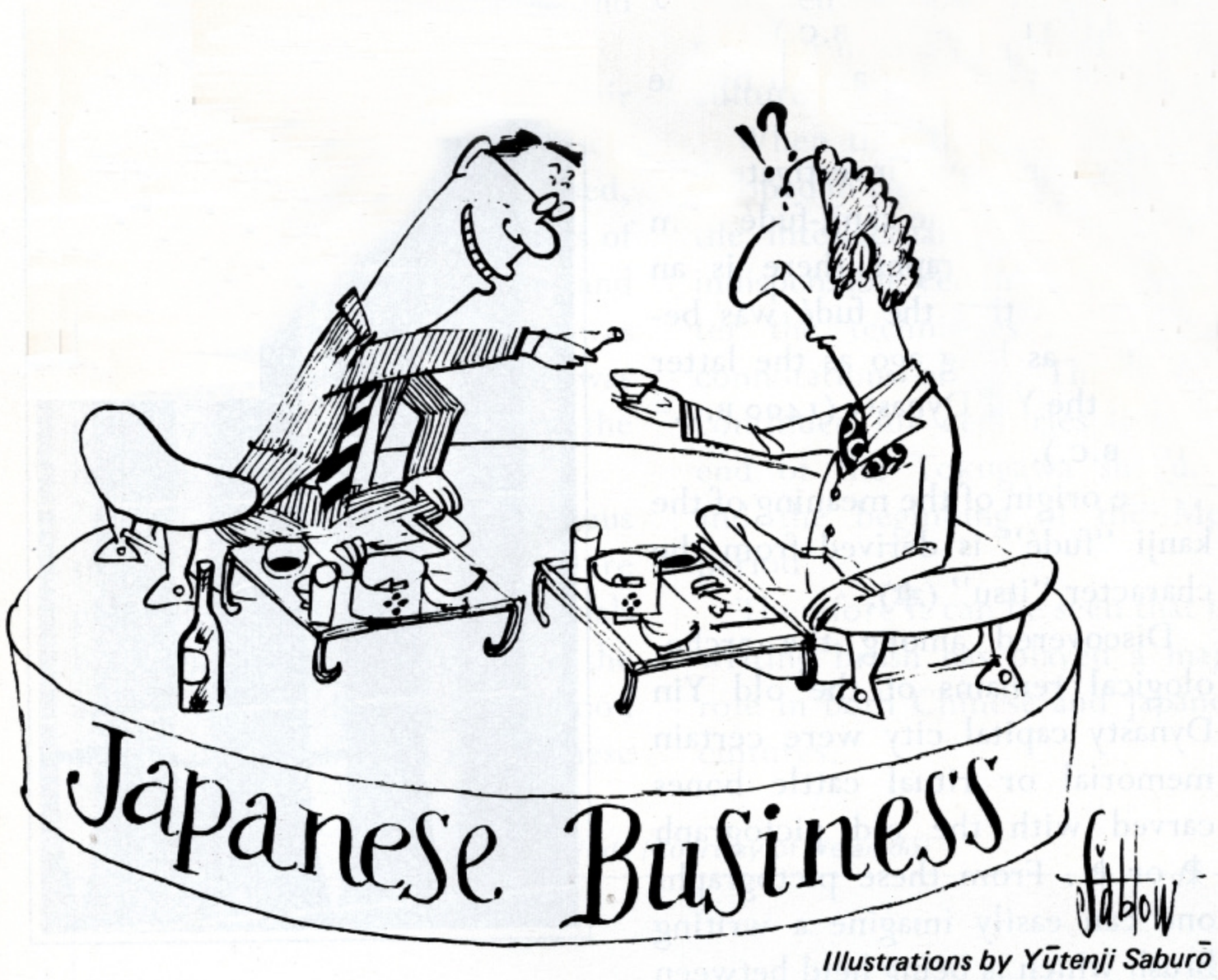
Of course, the satisfaction of emotional desires is equally important among Western people too, but till at present, in families, at clubs, or in individual countries' societies, people in the West take a much different view of what the Japanese call *ninjō*. Since modern times efforts have been made among Western people to eliminate from the economic world emotional or other non-rational elements, and as a result, economic activities have been developed mainly through reason, not through sentiment. Moreover, human relations in the economic world, too, have begun to take on an impersonal as well as affectivelly-neutral character. This has made the economic world a rational world concerned only with economic interests. Positively speaking this has brought about quick and accurate transactions and quite rational business operations. Furthermore, this has enabled an individual or a company to measure objectively the results of the behavior he or it took in the past; and also makes it possible to map out a plan about actions and behavior to be taken in the future and predict their results from a completely objective standpoint. Generally speaking, in Western society it has been considered to be undesirable to have so-called "pre-modern" emotional phenomenon such as *ninjō* affecting the economic market place.

Recently, however, such modern rationalism has seemed to be reaching a terminal stage. Even in America where rationalization is adopted in the most thorough form, an opinion is now prevailing that emotional elements cannot be ignored even in a highly economic orientated society. This opinion is warmly accepted especially in the realm of personnel management: For example, a company should be considered not merely as a technical organization, but as a human organization as well. Therefore, in managing it, "logic of sentiments" should be taken into consideration in line with "logic of cost" and "logic of efficiency"; up until now mainly the "logic of efficiency" had been adopted. From the position of what is termed the "Human Relations Theory", it is said that in order to facilitate the organizational management in a company, it is necessary that a person chosen for a management position should be capable of catching the subtle emotional shades of their subordinates. This necessity has produced a requirement for managers to be given "sensitivity training." More generally speaking, there is also a criticism that eliminating sentiments, or human attributes, from the economic world, something which is typified by modern organizations, has constituted a factor leading toward "human alienation."

In this connection, a recent trend in the Japanese economic world which has to look at the concept of *ninjō* with fresh interest is worthy of notice, even if criticized as "pre-modern" by Western people. Moreover, it should be noted that *ninjō*, as explained in the dictionary mentioned above, is based on the natural expression of feelings. Therefore, it differs somewhat from the feelings emphasized in the "Human Relations Theory" or "sensitivity training," which are artificial in that they are reconstituted after being analyzed scientifically through psychology, physiology, and psychoanalysis.

Emotional elements often lead people to take unselfish actions. Workers render enthusiastic services for the benefit of superiors whom they like, apart from calculation of gain and loss in wages, and management never fires employees even if they are proving not so useful in doing their work. These attitudes have helped facilitate Japanese labor-management relations and instill a great corporate loyalty and diligence in employees. This point was explained in Vol. IX No. 2 from the standpoint of economic interests; i.e., in Japan, the more development a company as a whole has achieved, the more the standard of living of individual employees working there will be elevated. However, this explanation overlooks human

relations based on emotional elements like *ninjō*, which play a very important role, in this connection, along with the economic elements. For example, the Japanese use words like the "love for one's company," or "corporate loyalty" to express a "spirit of enterprise" and this in turn indicates a strong influence from emotional elements. In short, for the Japanese, a company means not only a center of concentrating one's abilities for a certain interest but it takes on a much broader emotional context and commitment as well.



Illustrations by Yūtenji Saburō

In Japan, emotional relations should never be overlooked when considering labor-management relations and economic transactions as a whole. In the case of transacting business, unlike Western people, the Japanese do not like to contract formally at the office alone. First by holding a dinner party and drinking together, they establish warm and friendly relations with the business connections, and then they try to build up the economic relations by having discussions and undertaking the bargaining. Any transaction which is not backed up by these emotional elements makes the Japanese feel uneasy and increases misgivings about the business relationship.

The emotional elements, however, do not always function in the ideally expected way to connect people with each other. Only when warm feelings based on confidence or affection exist between the persons concerned do the emotional elements act as an agent to connect them. The confrontations caused by emotional relations, such as a quarrel between husband and wife, and strife between parents and child, will be far sharper than purely economic conflict that occur from a clash of interests. The reason why unusually severe struggles are often seen in Japanese labor-management relations is that the struggles unfolded are mostly not rational but emotional. In the rational economic world in the West, on the contrary, the settlement of labor-management dispute depends on the purely economic problem of "profit or loss." In the non-rational economic world in Japan, however, it is much more difficult to bring about a satisfactory settlement when a dispute of this kind occurs, because such personal feelings as hatred and detestation are openly displayed between the persons concerned. The same can be said for the attitudes taken by the victims in the recent industrial pollution confrontations. For example, the victims who acted as the plaintiff and eventually won the suit at the trial concerning the Minamata disease (a disease caused by organic mercury poisoning which was contained in factory waste. The case came to light in Minamata City, Kumamoto Prefecture, after the discovery of fish and shellfish which had been polluted by that waste mercury.) went so far as to go to the company in question after the trial and demanded that the responsible persons involved should apologize to them by prostrating themselves on the ground. What matters a great deal in a situation such as this is not the amount of money given in compensation, but the problem concerned with sentiments and the degree of sincerity shown by the guilty party for the damage done.

In Japanese society, human relations based on emotional elements like *ninjō* must still be regarded as important, but on the other hand, it is also true that such concepts have been losing ground since the end of World War II. A middle-aged or old man can often be heard to say, "I feel a yearning for the good old days"; meaning, for one thing, that in former times at the workplace, for instance, people were much closely related through warm and affectionate feelings than at present. 東

"The Brush of Mouse Whiskers"

If we go according to a one time Chinese historian named Ssu-ma Ch'ien 司馬遷 (135 B.C.–93 B.C.) who compiled the "Shih chi" 史記 (Historical Chronicals), the *fudé*, or the writing brush was invented during the Ch'in Dynasty period (221 B.C.–206 B.C.).

The inventor was a man by the name of Meng Tian.

However, if we investigate into the meaning of the kanji-fudé from the old pictographs there is an assumption that the fudé was being used as long ago as the latter part of the Yin Dynasty (1400 B.C.–1100 B.C.).

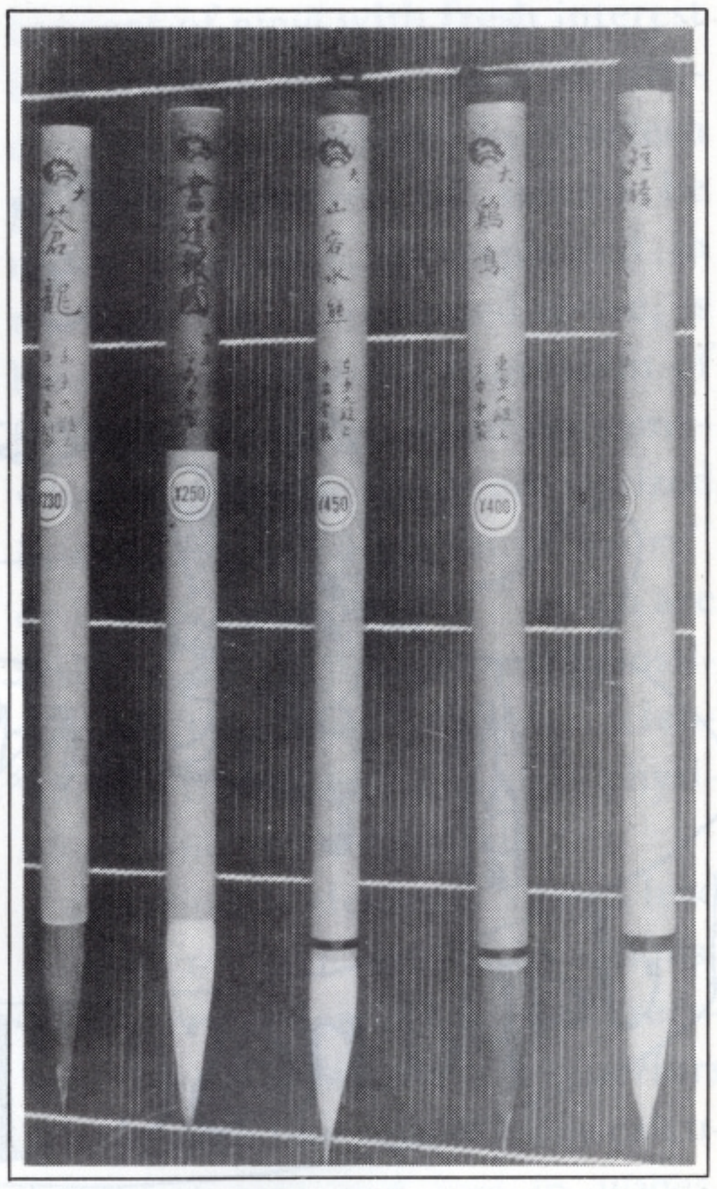
The origin of the meaning of the kanji "fudé" is derived from the character "itsu" (聿).

Discovered among the archeological remains of the old Yin Dynasty capital city were certain memorial or ritual cattle bones carved with the old pictograph 𣓥 or 𣓦. From these pictographs one can easily imagine a writing brush which is being held between the fingers of someone's hand.

Naturally it is not possible to determine what the materials were or what the method for making the brush was from just looking at the pictographs. However, there is little room to doubt that writing brushes were being used as long ago as 3,000 years or more.

The kanji 聿 eventually was replaced by the newly derived 筆, and the original meaning became lost. It assumed the grammatical connotation "well" and was used to begin sentences in the sense that one would say "well, let me see. . . . ."

From the strange twists of linguistic fate the original meaning of "writing brush" was no longer used.



The old pictograph for the kanji 筆 was 𥫱. The upper part of the kanji, the radical 竹, is taken from the character for bamboo, 竹 (také). The character signifying holding the brush in one's hand 聿 and 竹 were thus joined together to make the new version of the word.

The reason for adding "také" to the kanji during the Ch'in dynasty probably comes from the assumption that at that time the writing brushes had their handles made from bamboo, therefore it seemed

to be logical to add this to the original character.

Actual brushes from the period following the Ch'in dynasty, the early Han Kingdom, have been discovered and have been found to have been simply made with animal hair, chiefy rabbit, inserted at the tip of several strips of bamboo or wood which served as a handle and were tied in place with string to keep the hairs firmly in place for writing.

The material for the handle of the brush was generally bamboo, but in addition wood, bone, or in some rare cases gold, silver, and precious stones were also used.

As for the brush part, the hair of rabbits, goats, dogs, horses, badgers, foxes, and deer was used, or sometimes even the whiskers of mice; the feathers of chickens and pheasants were also used. It was said that the hair of the rabbit was good for the fall and that of the deer excellent for spring.

The rare metals and precious stones used for some brushes were probably those writing materials belonging to the royal court or the aristocracy; and it is understood that the greatest of all the Chinese calligraphers at the time Wang XI Zhi 王羲之 liked most of all to use writing brushes whose handles were made from bamboo and preferred the whiskers of mice for the brush part.

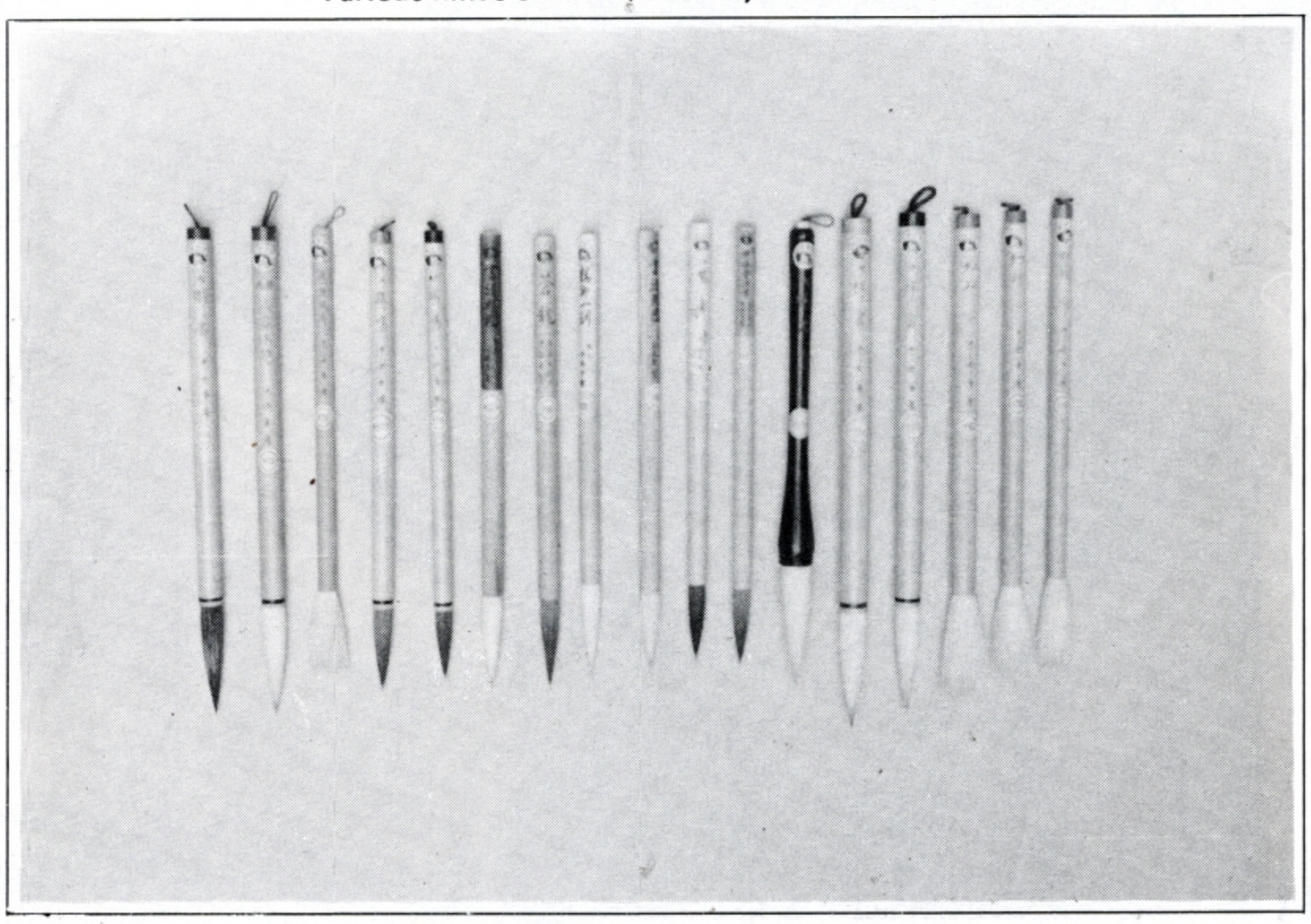
In China the brushing of characters became a highly aesthetic art, and was developed into a unique art form called *sho*.

Of course in the West the calligraphic arts exist but in China the significance and importance of *sho* is incomparably greater. *Sho* is considered just as great an art as literature or painting and has occupied a solidly independent position in the history of Chinese culture for centuries.

When the study of *sho* was developed in Japan in the 8th century, the intellectual class made it an indispensable requirement to master the techniques and cultural connotations of *sho*. This attitude continued for centuries until the end of the Tokugawa shōgunate and the beginning of the Meiji period.

Therefore it can be seen that the writing brush has played a major role in both Chinese and Japanese cultures. 東

Various kinds of fudé (Courtesy of Heian-dō)



Holes in the Argument

It was New Year's Eve when all the merchants were going around to collect the debts that had accrued during the year. The rice dealer went to visit a certain unemployed samurai who had not paid up for ages. "Good evening," he called out.

"Who's there?" from inside.

"This is your rice man. I've come to see you about your account."

"Rice man, huh? Nobody home."

(That's strange. I could have sworn that was his voice.) The doors were *shōji* so the rice dealer licked his finger and put it to the paper. A nice hole opened immediately and he peeked through. Sure enough, there was the samurai hunched over the brazier trying to keep warm. "You are too there!" shouted the rice dealer. "I can see you!"

Furious, the samurai shouted back, "What do you mean by opening a hole in my shōji? Don't you know a man's home is his castle?"

"Oh, oh, I'm terribly sorry," the rice dealer apologized humbly, and, drawing some paper from his kimono sleeve, proceeded to wet it with a little saliva and cover the hole. "I fixed it, okay?"

"Are you sure you fixed it? You can't see me?"

"No, I can't see you."

"You're sure you can't see me?"

"I'm sure I can't see you."

"All right, nobody home."

(from Edo Ko-banashi)

The Rugged Life of Chichibu

Our special express train had left Tōkyō's Ikebukuro station and was heading northwest across the Kantō Plain when we entered a valley with mountains on either side and arrived at the terminal station Chichibu. Travel time one and a half hours. Chichibu, the main city of the Chichibu region in Saitama Prefecture, is really a small sized town of only 60,000 population. Here the railroad station, excluding the busy spring and fall holiday seasons, is sometimes so quiet that there's no one at the ticket gate. Those just arriving find themselves in a small town surrounded by mountains on all sides, seemingly so distant from the din of the large metropolis they have just left behind. The whole area consists of Chichibu City at its focus, with four towns and five villages scattered about the basin.

Out back lie a 2000 meter high range of mountain peaks running from south to west and aligned as if meant to prop up a folding screen; mountain pleats, stretching out like the fibers of a spider's web, take up more than half the basin. Farmers here have for generations picked out a scant living by clinging to these sharply inclined slopes. But this mountainous country, with poor soil and little flat area for cultivation, has never yielded bountiful harvests.

Metropolitan culture, thriving not physically all that far away, has hardly reached this mountain country. Rather Chichibu's range of mountains out back still preserve beautiful virgin forests; festivals, folk religion and customs that transmit the vestiges of olden times long past still remain here in this area little washed by the waves of modern progress.

↑ Mt. Bukō in autumn. (1,336 meters)

Wheat fields fill the small area →
available around the mountains.

Buddhas of the Field

RAMBLING ALONG Chichibu's narrow, still unpaved roads we often come across lingering stone Buddhas that seem to have been forgotten by the wayside. Such roadside Buddhas, so different in character from the artistic Buddhist sculpture made by skilled craftsmen that are enshrined in larger temples, were devotedly carved by unknown sculptors for the sake of the common people. These simple, naive stone Buddhas have an inexpressible beauty in their forms and expressions.

Spread out on either side of these narrow roads, we see fields of mulberry trees, which serve as the feed for silk worms. A distinctive feature of the old, grass roofed farm houses that lie scattered throughout the fields is the silk worm nursery located on the second floor. Chichibu is the largest mulberry tree grower in the Kantō region.

Chichibu residents, living in this narrow, harsh basin, generation upon generation have had to

Chichibu Region

depend on their support from such poor means as gathering fire wood, making charcoal, cultivating minor grains, and raising silk worms—and its subsidiaries, silk thread and cloth manufacture. Such poor livelihoods, especially that of raising silk worms, are extremely suscep-

Sericulture is a prosperous industry in Chichibu and has been the sideline of many farmers for centuries.

People making Konnyaku (devil's tongue) jelly.

tible to climatic adversities. Hence farmers here have always prayed to the *Kami* (native Japanese dities) for good weather and abundant crops. For the people of mountainous Chichibu, these kami are the "*furusato* of the heart" (furusato means hometown, the place where one was born and raised); at the same time these kami are the inviolable sacred

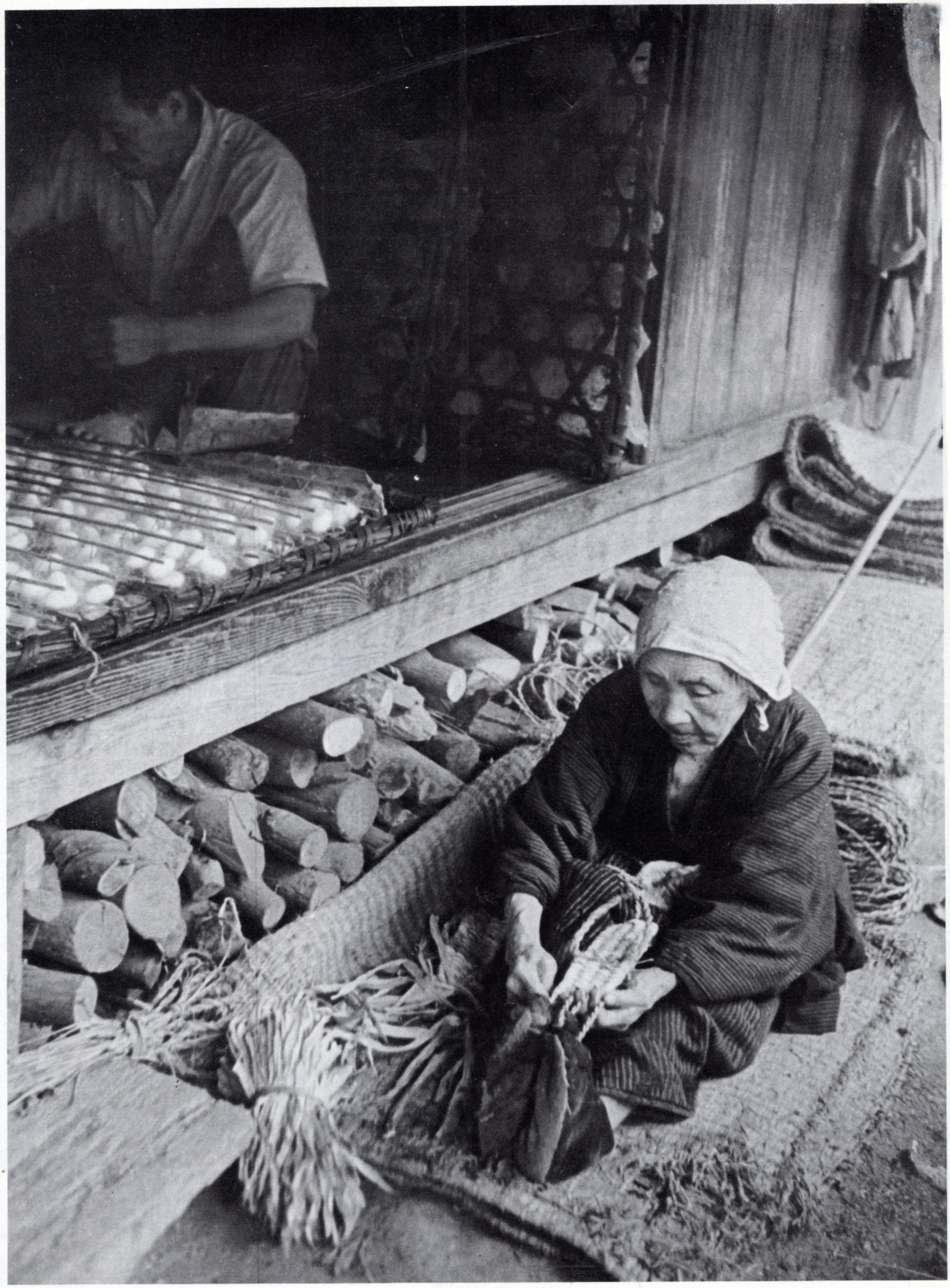
mountains that rise up on all sides. Here, the people believe the mountains watch over the farming and are the site of *Yomi no Kuni*, the Land of the Dead. But the people do not pray to only *Kami*. They also beseech Buddha and Kannon (the Bodhisattva Avaloketesvara) to save them from the hardships of everyday life.

Scattered throughout the Chichibu region on mountain tops and on the plain are temples, numbering from one to thirty-four, dedicated to the worship of Kannon. These temples, erected six hundred years ago, reflect the popularity of Kannon during the Heian Period (8–12 century) when thirty-three temples dedicated to Kannon were established in the leading cultural centers of the day—Kyōto, Nara and Ōsaka.

The number thirty-three derives from a passage in the *Lotus Sutra* stating that Kannon changes into thirty-three forms in order to bring people salvation. Holy spots in Chichibu originally also numbered thirty-three, but in later years increased to thirty-four—but the reason why remains unclear. Pilgrimage to each of the thirty-four temples of Chichibu became very popular during the Edo Period (17th—first half of the 19th century). Because belief in Kannon was widely held by the common people, most of the pilgrims were farmers and townspeople, including not only residents of Chichibu itself but people from Edo (the old name for Tōkyō) and even

←
Ancient rituals and dances remain to this day in Chichibu.

While the mother makes straw sandals, her son is tending to cocoons. →



A group of stone Buddhas standing in a row in Kinshō-ji Temple. This garden is a part of one of Kannon's 34 most sacred places. ⟶

Mysterious Mitsuminé Shrine shrounded in fog.

farther away. During a busy year, more than 40,000 pilgrams would make the rounds of these thirty-four Kannon temples. Wearing white clothing, with a sleeveless robe and a sledge hat, they would walk chanting from temple to temple, stopping at each to deposit their charm and to pray for Kannon's mercy. Even today in this region you may still catch sight of white robed pilgrims, usually devoted elderly women, making their rounds to each of the temples dedicated to Kannon.

Distressed People's Band

In 708 WHEN the first copper was being made in Japan, Chichibu was bathed in the light of history, but for more than 1000 years afterwards, she cast no shadows on the stage of history. Natives of this poor land eked out a marginal existence with plough and hoe. Chichibu if known at all was known for its border guards and as a supply depot for lower ranked samurai.

Farmers who were unable to lead sufficiently satisfying lives by only farming turned to silk worm raising, and its subsidiary silk thread

and cloth manufacture, in the Edo Period to help make ends meet. Chichibu became known for its silk. But this slight silk industry consisted chiefly of small and medium sized operations and hence were readily affected by the waves of economic fluctuation. On 1 January 1884, poor farmers who were suffering under excessively high interest on their debts formed a military organization called Konmin-Tō (Troubled People's Band) and rose in rebellion demanding decreased interest rates and debt deferment. These farmers, who won over to their side members of the Jiyū-Tō, or Liberal Party (at that time a political party advocating the expansion of the people's freedom and authority), took up hunting arms and set out from the outlying districts for ōmiyagō, the center of local government located in what is now Chichibu City. Adding non-party people who were sympathetic to their cause as they went along, the band burnt the homes of mercenary money lenders and destroyed records of their debts. The rebels steadily grew all along the way until their number reached, by one account, more than 10,000 people.

Upon one of the mountains on the outskirts of present day Chichibu sits Ongaku-ji (literally Music temple, named from the beautiful sound of its temple bell), number twenty-three of the thirty-four Kannon Temples. Our band of rebels apparently furiously pummulled this bell just before they rushed down the mountain toward the center of Chichibu. Entering the town, they first occupied the regional government offices and then attacked and burned the court house and the police station, destroying public documents as they went. However, they strictly limited their attacks to only government offices and their tight-fisted creditors, striving as best they could to leave the innocent unscathed. Only after the government sent in a large number of troops and police was the uprising finally put down after four days of fighting. Two thousand three hundred

Mt. Ryōgami in a sea of clouds. (1,724 meters)

Photographs of Shimizu Bukō

rebels were arrested and punished, including seven who were sentenced to death.

Today more than a century after this uprising, the people of Chichibu are beginning to forget all about it. But this by no means indicates that this mountainous country has been developed or has exhibited any great changes. No, in the midst of Japan's overall population growth, there are towns and villages here in Chichibu that are steadily declining. This is because practically all the second and third sons of the farmers leave their homes to work in nearby Tōkyō. (In Japan the eldest son customarily takes over his father's house and carries on his work.) Those remaining behind continue to scrape out an existence in the fields just like their fathers before them.

Pilgrims walking along a mountain path.

Iroha Cards

DURING THE latter part of the Heian Period (8th-12th Century), the aristocracy, especially the women, were enthralled by an amusement called "kaiōi"—the shellfish game.

The object of the game was to perfectly match correct pairs of shells together. Three hundred and sixty clams were divided in two and the corresponding pairs were mixed up and spread about on the floor; then the object of the game was to locate the two parts of the clam which were mates. The winner of the game was decided from the number of correctly matched shells.

Indeed, as strange as it may seem this "kaiōi" game was a distant descendant of the Japanese card game called "karuta".

From the outset of this column we began by introducing the simplified form of the Chinese characters used in Japanese to represent the phonetic symbols of the language. That simplied form, of course, is the "kana" or Japanese alphabet. After that we spoke of the cards used in conjunction with teaching the kana alphabet, the "iroha."

This being the last in the series of articles about kana, we would like to base the discussion on the iroha cards.

Well, as was mentioned in the opening paragraph about the shell game called "kaiōi", it continued in popularity until around the 16th century. By that time a great deal of refinement had been added to its originally simple form. For example, one variation was to paint the same pictures of a certain subject on the inside of both parts of a shell pair or another variation was to take the traditional "waka" poetry and divide the stanzas by writing one part of the poem in one half of the shell pair and the remaining stanzas in the other half. Waka are always written in the syllable form 5–7–5–7–7, so for the shell game the 5–7–5 lines of the poem would be written into one half of the shell pair and the 7–7 lower lines would be written into the other half of the shell. The object of this game would be to match the correct stanzas of a poem by reading the first lines in one shell and choosing the right lines to end the poem from those scattered on the floor.

Still, even up until this time cards had not yet been introduced, and the shell games were by far

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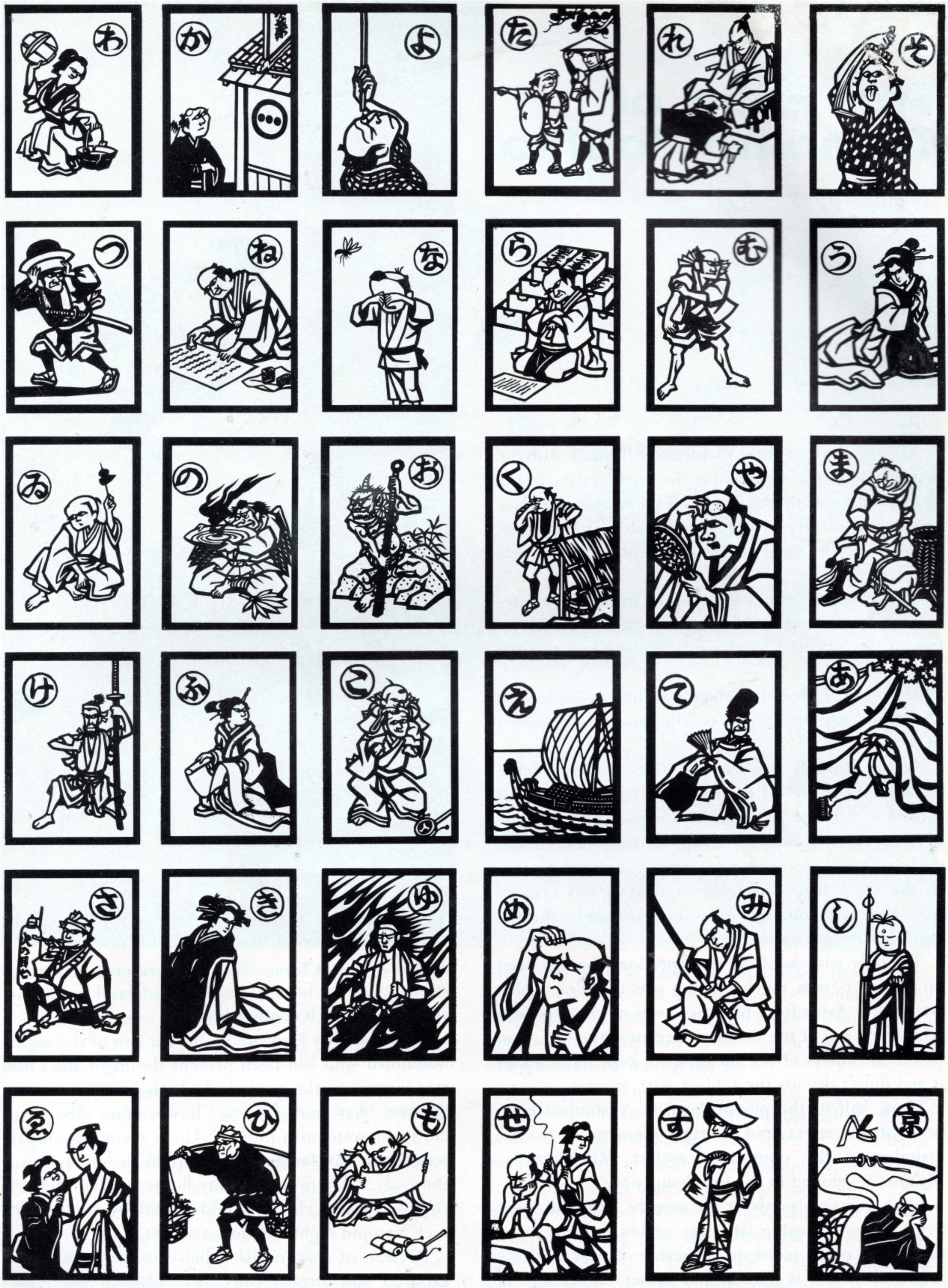


from Edo Iroha published by Shinsen-sha
Cut paper illustrations by Takidaira Jiro

The Exile of Tomo-no-Yoshio

National Treasure
Handscroll
The latter half of the 12th Century
31.5 cm. high
Personal property of Mr. Tadahiro Sakai

THE STORY OF these picture scrolls deals with the people and events surrounding the conflagration of the Ōten-mon, one of the gates of the Imperial Palace grounds in the Heian period in Kyōto. The incident occurred on the night of the 10th of March in the year 866 A.D.

On that night upon hearing of the firing of the gate, surprised authorities rushed up the great main thoroughfare of the city, the Suzaku road, to the scene of the catastrophe.

There was a great disturbance as the crowds looked up at the Ōten gate as the swirling flames wrapped it in fire.

At the time of the fire, the Vice-Minister of the State was a man called Tomo-no-Yoshio who was locked in a bitter struggle with a rival by the name of Minamoto-no-Makoto. Using the destruction of the gate as a pretext, Tomo-no-Yoshio generated rumors to the affect that Minamoto-no-Makoto was responsible for the crime, and eventually succeeded in disgracing him into exile.

The only witness of the conflagration who had been on the spot from the beginning was the lone night-watchman. Aside from him there was no other person who knew any of the details concerning the fire. Due to the awfulness of the incident he kept quiet about it and didn't discuss the subject with anyone.

Thus, half of the plot of Tomo-no-Yoshio had been brought into effect, and the right moment for the remainder of the conspiracy against Minamoto-no-Makoto developed in the following way.

On a certain day about six months after the great fire, Tomo-no-Yoshio fate was sealed because of a seemingly petty incident. Whether it was entirely arranged or not is unclear but rather coincidentally the son of one of Tomo-no-Yoshio servants, the servant in charge of the finances for the household, got into a violent fight with another boy.

The other boy happened to be the son of the night-watchman who had been present the night the Ōten gate burned to the ground. And who should separate the two boys from fighting? It was none other than the night watchman himself. Upon seeing the night-watchman, the servant's son turned to him and said abusively, "The master of my house is Vice-Minister Tomo-no-Yoshio He would have nothing to do with such a stupid night-watchman as you."

Because of this insulting behavior perhaps or because it was already previously planned the night-

watchman then began spreading the story that Tomo-no-Yoshio was the arsonist responsible for the fire that had destroyed the great Ōten gate.

Tomo-no-Yoshiowas then suddenly seized and sent into exile to Izu.

These picture scrolls are rich with the details of this stormy tale and are arranged into a beautiful composition about it.

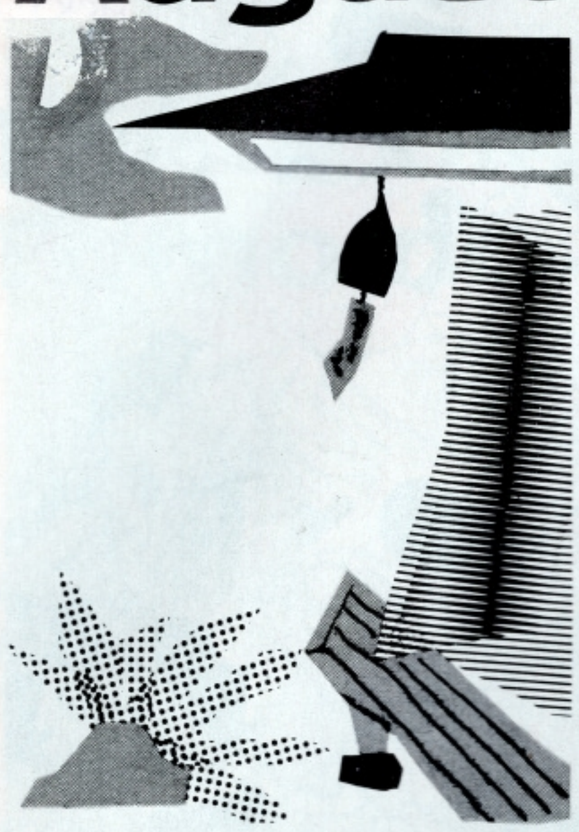
This set of scrolls along with the Genji-monogatari (Tales of Genji) collection and the Shigisan-engi pictures rank as the finest masterpieces of Japanese picture scroll stories in existence.

The artist catches with fine, softness the various lively poses of all the human beings in the pictures from the aristocracy and officials down to the common man. The accuracy of the customs and manners of the people of that time are shown superbly and from a historical, material point of view are priceless glimpses of a society now lost to the ages.

Although it is not known for sure, the artist may have possibly been a very active Court painter by the name of Tokiwa Mitsunaga, but whether it was he or not the scrolls were completed around the year 1170.

The picture presented here is the scene of the Ōten gate's destruction by fire. As the sparks of the fire flicker and swing over the scene covering everything in fiery destruction the crowd is shown gathering and watching the gate's final agonies. 東

August



August is the hottest month of the year. The clear weather keeps up every day, with no wind and the broiling sun overhead. People sweat constantly under daytime temperatures often exceeding 86 degrees Fahrenheit.

To bear such intense heat and to take their minds away from the high humidity, the Japanese people have devised various ploys for making themselves feel cool and refreshed.

Bamboo Blind

As soon as we detect a touch of summer at the beginning of July, we rearrange our rooms. Under the eaves, we let down a *sudaré* 簾, or bamboo blind, remove the *shōji* (paper-covered sliding door) or *fusuma* (sliding screen) which partition the room, and fit in a *sudo*, a reed door (sliding screen fitted with *sudaré*). The sudaré is made of slender bamboo cylinders which are sewed together with threads. This is not only refreshing to look at, but intercepts the direct sunlight and puts the room into a wet as well as cool mood. Fresh air is let into the room through the sudaré while still retaining the fresh and lively sense of the dark greens seen in the garden.

Inside, you may look out through the sudaré, but outside no one can look in. A sudaré is very much like a blind in its function but with a blind one has to be very close to it to look outside while with the sudaré one can see out even from across the room. This may recall a magic mirror, but the sudaré, unlike glass, allows air to circulate.

That is to say, while open to the outside, the sudaré resists excessive incursions from without. The word "excessive" involves a specifically pychological meaning. In ancient times, an interview between a person of noble birth was made through a sudaré (formerly called *misu* 御簾), which served to separate the world of the interviewer from that of the noble man; the distance here involves not so much an actual spacial relationship but more of a psychological separation based on social position. In such a case, the sudaré acted not as a sunscreen but rather as an intervening agent to impart a sense of distance and difference.

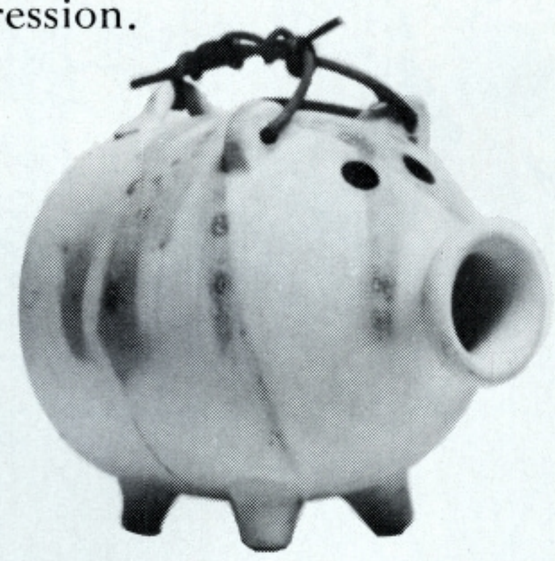
Popularization of the sudaré in the daily life of ordinary citizens has eliminated this role as an agent for class distinction, and today it is used exclusively as a sunscreen. Nowadays as the "bamboo curtain", it has become an important Japanese export and has begun attracting fresh interest as a complement to furniture in modern architectural settings.

Smudge to Repel Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes thrive during the muggy summers brought on by the wet monsoon season. We learn from verses in the *Manyōshū* that even way back when this poetry anthology was compiled, we Japanese had to endure the summertime assaults of mosquitoes. To get a good night's sleep back then people tried everything to drive away the pesky mosquitoes-making wood fires, burning leaves of Japanese cedar, offering incense, or even incantation and magic.

Today, we still find all kinds of devices to repel mosquitoes in Japan. But in spite of "exotic" battery powered devices, the most popular type remains the simple flat spiral-shaped ring made of pyrethrum. We light this ring and our worries are over; mosquitoes drop on the spot.

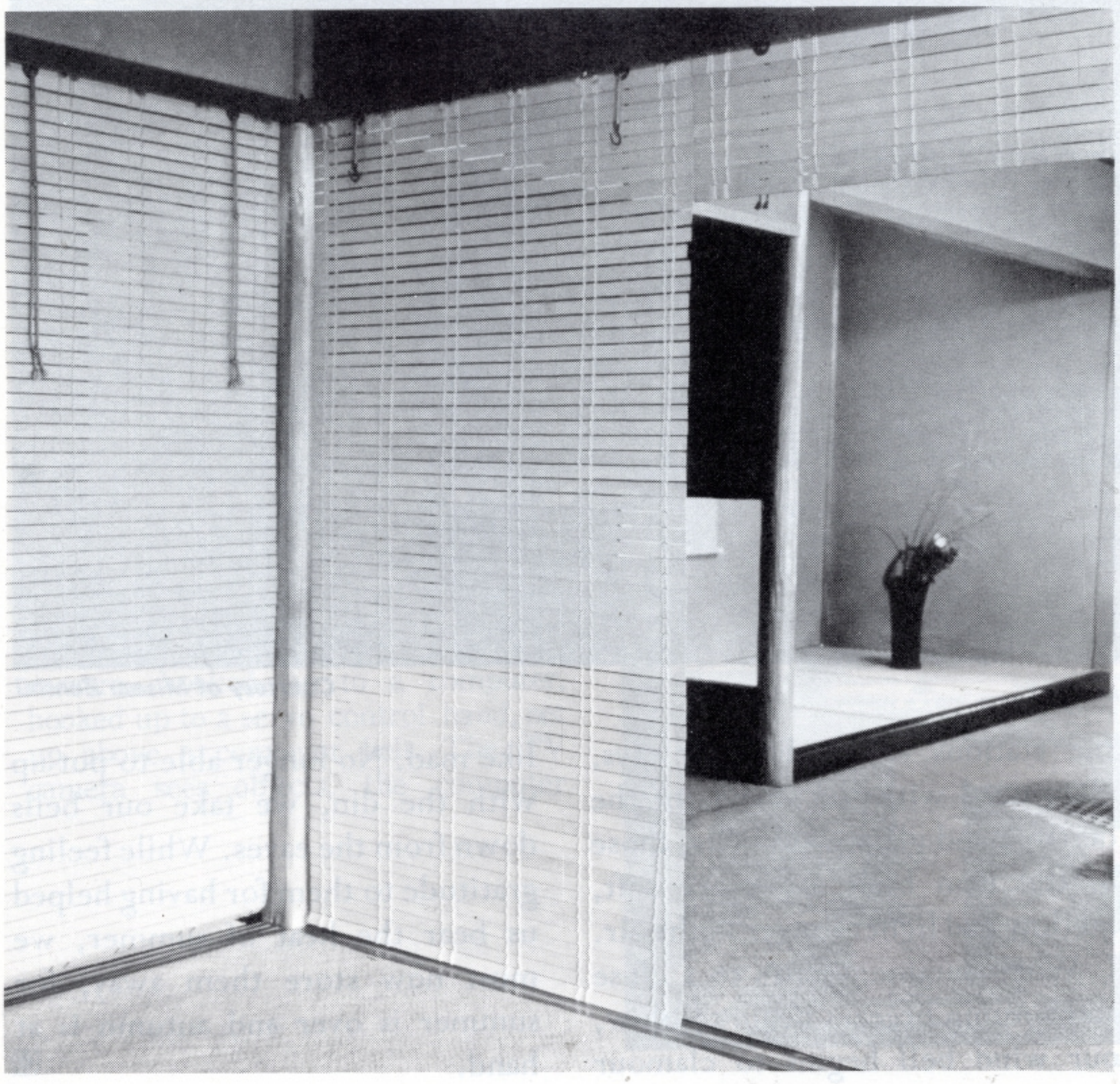
Nor have we ignored the holders of this effective green ring. Some holders may look like bonbon bowls, others resemble a *yakata-buné* (house boat), and still others appear like the water imp called "kappa," a Japanese badger or even like Hotei (one of the Seven Dieties of Good Fortune who is characterized by his pot belly). But most popular from olden times has been the pig shaped mosquito smoker, wearing a simple but humorous expression.



This pig-shaped mosquito smoker is known also as "Imado Pottery," for it is made of pottery baked mainly around Imado in downtown Tōkyō. Made wholly of unglazed pottery with only some flame marks left on the surface, its very simple form consisting only of holes made at the nose, eyes and tail lends it an indescribable touch of humor.

As the hot, muggy day draws to a close and night begins to fall, people who have just refreshed themselves with a bath and changed

into *yukata* (light cotton kimono for summer wear) gather around the garden's *endai* (bamboo bench) to play Go or Shōgi (the game of Chinese chess). They never fail to greet one another with an "It was really hot today, wasn't it." Nearby, some children may be shooting off fireworks while others may very well be listening to a ghost story told by one of the adults. (Such ghost stories are an indispensable part of the Japanese summer. For example, the Kabuki theatre always stages a gruesome ghost story on its summer program, for its macabre plot is sure to both literally and figuratively send chills through the audience.)



When people are outdoors enjoying the evening cool, a pig-shaped mosquioto smoker is always placed on the ground to ward off the hungry mosquitoes. This silent companion accompanies its owners silently and patiently, ever ready to do its part to help ward off the pesky insects, and as such has long been a necessary prop for summer life in Japan. Recently, however, the scene with the smoking mosquito ring has become rare indeed, particularly in the cities where mosquitoes are few to be found.

Wind Bell

What we enjoy most in the intense heat of midsummer is the "wind". We sense a soft breeze on our skin; we delight in the sound of the wind bell hung under the eaves as it rings in the breeze.

The wind bell, originally introduced from China, was also called a "*fūtaku*" or "*tetsuba*." A story relates how one Tang Chinese Emperor hung a string of gems from a bamboo branch and could sense the kind of wind from the sounds it gave off. However, adopting such a device to enhance the pleasures of a cool summer breeze was left for the inventiveness of the Japanese people. Forced to endure stifling temperatures and high humidity in summer, the gentle din of the wind bell enhances our enjoyment of the eagerly awaited balmy summer breezes.

Many kinds of wind bells are made today-ceramic, colored glass, and most famous of all, iron. These iron wind bells, produced in northeastern Japanese, have various forms, the oldest being a small form

Courtesy of Misesu Zenshū

of a temple bell with a clapper inside and a *tanzaku*, or fancy piece of paper for writing a poem on, hung by a thread from the clapper.

Tradition states that this is a relic of the bell which a *hikyaku*, or early express messenger, used to announce himself as he approached the stations along the highways. Compared with the sounds of the ceramic and glass wind bells, those of the iron bells are more soft, mellow and ligner longer in the air.

When summer draws to a close and autumn breezes begin to blow, our wind bell begins to clamour like mad. No longer able to put up with the din, we take our bells down from the eaves. While feeling gratitude to them for having helped us bear the heat of summer, we must now store them away, for summer is over and autumn is at hand. 東

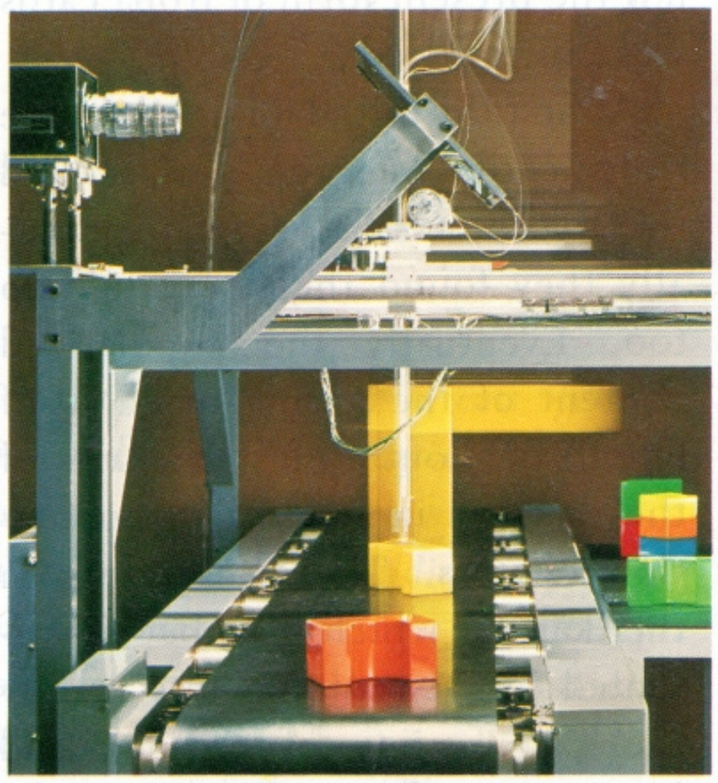
I am you.

My name is Masakazu Ejiri. And here I am at home playing with the kids. I think about them a lot, even while I'm working for Hitachi. I think about them because I worry. About their happiness, about their welfare, and about the world they'll have to live in.

So I work hard.

One of my most successful projects is HIVIP—the Hitachi Visual Image Processing robot. Briefly, HIVIP is a hand-eye system. Comprising a TV camera, hooked up to a computer, hooked up to a servo control hand, set up above a conveyor belt. The TV camera sees objects, the computer recognizes them, and the hand rearranges them as they move along the conveyor.

HIVIP may sound simple, but it isn't. It's a big step toward developing a true artificial intelligence. And I worked years on it.



HIVIP can do any number of things. From delicate assembly work, to baggage handling and warehousing, to sterile packaging operations. It can free workers to do things that are less demanding. Or less dangerous. Or less tedious.

And that's where the kids come in.

I'm working to build a world where everyone can have a meaningful job. A better world. Not just for my children, but for your children too.

So when I work for Hitachi, I'm working for all of you.

Because my work will benefit me. And I am you.

HITACHI

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Cont. from p. 30

the most popular.

At the end of the 16th century however, the Portugese brought with them to Japan a kind of playing card called by the Japanese "karuta". From this association with the Portugese influence the Japanese playing card had its birth. In Portugese the name of the playing card they brought was "Carta", and from this word the Japanese word *karuta* was derived.

The original Japanese cards of this type were mainly poetry cards. The poetry cards had classic lines from Japanese poets written on them. The object of the game was similar to the later form of the shell game which had had waka written in them. There would be one card with the first stanza of a classic poem written in it which was read aloud by one participant while the other players had to listen carefully and quickly choose from the remainder of the cards which were scattered at random on the floor the one card that correctly completed the lines from the card being recited aloud.

Although this game had an element of chance, the main purpose was more important than arousing one's gambling instincts; while having an enjoyable time the game taught the girls and the children playing it the Japanese alphabet as well as lines from the classic poets.

These kinds of cards were also used in a simplied form to instill a basic knowledge of history as well as other subjects.

It is difficult to say whether from a more international point of reference that the particular way in which the Japanese adapted the cards for educational purposes can actually be called "playing cards" in the sense that other countries think of them, but nontheless one can say that the special adaption is certainly unique. Of course in Japan there are also the gambling variety of cards too, but they have absolutely no connection with the *iroha karuta* about which we have been speaking.

Among "karuta" were various types, not all of them associated with poetry; for example, some were personally designed by the players themselves; some had beautifully painted pictures done with rich colors while others were simply but finely painted with light, soft tones.

The main theme of the poetry cards was occupied with the aristocratic literature of the Heian Period. One collection of poems was composed of as many as 1106 poems, in the "Ancient and Modern Poems" (Kokinwakashū), for example, all of which were used for "karuta".

But by the time of the middle of the 18th century the strength of the commoners and their circumstances had undergone a great change. As a result of this, the content of the karuta yielded to certain social alterations.

For example, there was a greater familiarization and popularization of the karuta's contents by using current proverbs and employing the contemporary thinking of the classes of society outside the aristocracy. At the time that this representative movement of the middle classes was making itself felt the present form of iroha cards were introduced.

At first the initial influence of the iroha cards was centered around the Kyōto, Ōsaka area but gradually they found their way to Edo too. Eventually the popularized content of the karuta made itself felt throughout almost all parts of the country in the major population centers. The material from the karuta which has been presented in this column was mainly the Edo variety of outlook and humor.

This Edo humor is representative of the views of the popular culture at the time and contains examples of rather ribald humor criticism of the social structure, and a great deal of satire.

Because the contents of the later karuta were an expression of the commoner classes, the Edo variety of karuta did not cause much of an arousal of interest among the disciplined samurai. In some areas of the country like the rigidly structured society of Kagoshima prefecture the Iroha cards were not allowed to be officially introduced until the beginning of the Meiji Period.

However among the women and children of Edo the Iroha cards were repeatedly used as a popular amusement among the people. Whenever someone read from one of the cards, the women and children of the period seemed to have played with great enthusiasm the simple game based on pictures and skillfully written poems. Whether or not the children of the time really appreciated the sometimes serious content of the cards or understood the deeper meanings is quite another matter however.

This question is made in light of the nameless writers of the period who reached into the bottom of their hearts to ask penetrating questions of themselves and others concerning the human condition. These men wrote keenly of the foolishness and sadness of their fellow men, no doubt themselves included, but they wrote in a way mingling joy and sorrow so that they would often laugh at themselves and their way of life.

These unknown writers threw off pretence and wrote of life in a humorous and sometimes sarcastic way and we can assume finally that their contribution to others was probably greater than they ever dared to imagine. 東

The Spirit Trees of Yakushima

by Higuchi Chiyoko

Yaku-sugi, *a Japanese cedar (sugi in Japanese) seen only on a small island called "Yakushima," is a world-wide rarity in various respects. A sugi is a needle-leaf tree that originally grows only in Japan, and so is called by it's scientific name of "Cryptomeria japonica." Of the trees growing in Japan, it is the largest in terms of cutting volume and is used for various purposes; its uses range from such big things as ships, bridges, and buildings to much smaller ones as fittings, furnitures, boxes for Japanese cakes, geta (wooden clogs), and* wari-bashi *(disposable; ready-to-use, pull-apart chopsticks.)*

The geographical distribution of Japanese cedars is very wide, ranging from Aomori Prefecture, in the north, to Kyūshū Island, in the south: beautiful forests of Japanese cedars are found throughout the country.

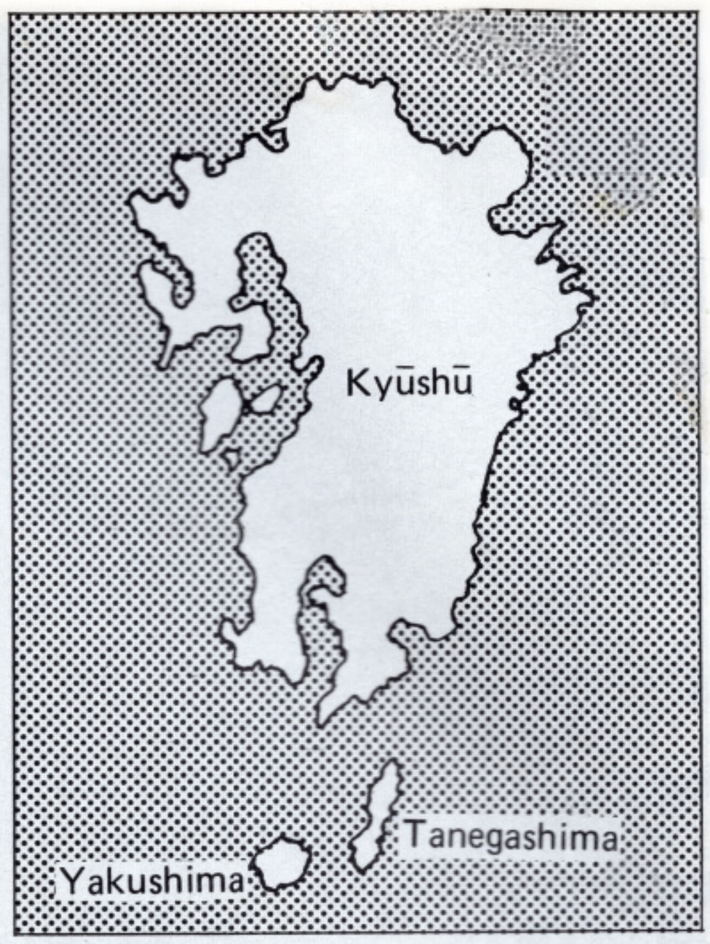
Among these Japanese cedars, the one grown on the Island of Yakushima

which is situated to the south of Kyūshū is widely known for its great size and beauty, and is world-famous as a precious wood.

The Birthplace of Yakusugi

THE ISLAND OF Yakushima is 93 miles south out to sea from Kagoshima Prefecture which is situated in the southernmost part of Kyūshū. It is roughly round-shaped with a diameter of 28 kilometers from east to west, 24 kilometers from south to north and is 100 kilometers in circumference. It is really a small island with a total area of only about 500 square kilometers. This island, however, is geographically speaking in marked contrast with the Island of Tanegashima which stands quite close to it. The Island of Tanegashima is a rather flat island with only 300 meters at the highest point above sea level, while on the Island of Yakushima, there are five mountains of more than 1,800 meters above sea level, including Mt. Miyanoura (1,935 meters), its highest mountain. There is a range of as many as 30 mountains of more than 1,000 meters, the ridges of which stretch towards the seashore. Near the seashore, they form precipitous cliffs and appear to stand up straight in front of the sea of *Kuroshio*, the Black Current.

An entirely accurate picture of this chain of mountains on the Island of Yakushima, which is called "The Marine Alps," cannot be had either from the ships sailing nearby or from the seashore. The reason is that the Island is covered with rain clouds throughout the year, so that people go so far as to say, "it rains without stopping for '35' days a month," and that unless unusually lucky, most people can hardly have



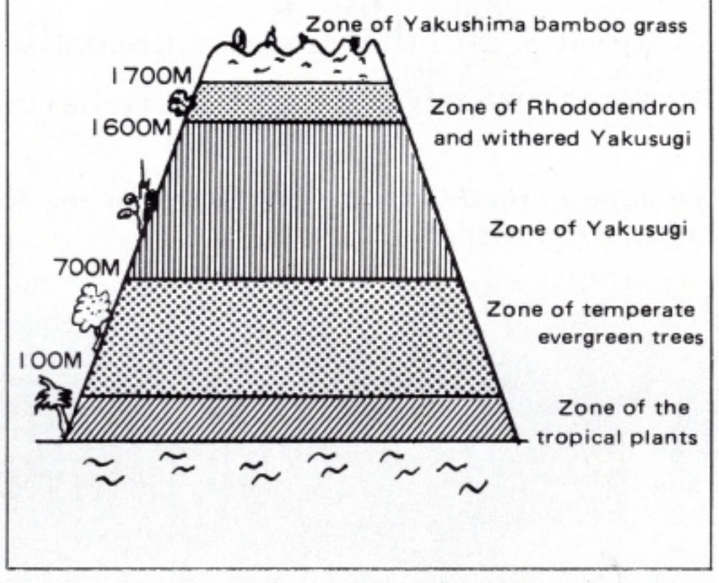
any chance to see even one mountain in its entirety. According to the island's statistics, the annual rainfall of this Island is 3,000 to 4,000 millimeters at ground level and as much as 10,000 millimeters in the mountains. This Island holds the foremost record of all in rainfall in Japan, even though the country as a whole is said to have

In June in the Hana-no-Ego district of the island, Rhododendron cover the surroundings like a beautiful carpet.

relatively much rain. (The annual rainfall of Tokyo is 1,500 millimeters.) One may ask—why is there so much rain in the Island of Yakushima? The reason is that it is situated in a special rain area; that is, as it belongs to the subtropical zone, there are squalls every day, and moreover, in the rainy season, a seasonal rain front stays just over this area, bringing about a long spell of rainy weather; also, in autumn, concentrated heavy rains with storms hit this area, because it falls on the main course through which typhoons pass.

Plentiful rains flow like the spokes of a wheel from the tops of mountains towering at the center of the Island, forming several rivers, a number of glens, and beautiful waterfalls here and there on the way. Furthermore, the average temperature of this Island, which stands at latitude 30 degrees north, is 81 degrees Fahrenheit in summer and 54 degrees in winter. The sun there is not so scorching as to kill plants, nor are there any frosts that freeze roots and buds of plants. This climate with such moderate temperature, plus much rain and

The Vertical Distribution of Plants in Yakushima



high humidity, has helped make possible the growing of various plants, from tropical varieties to polar ones, at the heights of the mountains, thereby making this Island a world-famous botanical treasure house.

When you go up one of those mountains, you will find the number of Japanese cedars increase notably around 700 meters above sea level, and the higher you climb, the more you will detect them. Of such Japanese cedars, island inhabitants have valued especially huge ones which are more than 1,000 years old, calling them "*Yaku-sugi*." On this island, the Japanese cedars of less than 1,000 years of age are called not "*Yaku-sugi*" but "Ko-sugi," small cedars.

Such natural woods composed of the *Yaku-sugi* on this Island, along with the sequoia in the United States, are considered as some of the most precious "virgin woods" in the world.

Dr. Wilson, the American botanist, who visited this Island in 1921 to research on its peculiar plants, happened to discover, while going on investigation tour on foot into the mountains covered with the *Yaku-sugi*, that a black mass everybody had considered a big rock was, in fact, a stump of a huge *Yaku-sugi*.

This stump is 32 meters in circumference at the base, 13 meters in diameter and 4 meters in height, with a large cave within which is About 16 square meters in area. One can see that the size of this *Yaku-sugi* is stupendous. This stump was named "Wilson Stump" after the discoverer—Dr. Wilson. The age of this *Yaku-sugi* is estimated at 3,000 years, and it is reported that about 380 years ago, Kagoshima's Lord Shimazu cut it down to present it to the ruler of those days Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

In ancient times, island inhabittants worshiped the *Yaku-sugi* as a tree in which God dwelt and so never cut it down for fear of God. It is told that Tomari Jochiku, who was born on the Island about 400 years ago, once shut himself in the mountains for 17 days, and prayed to God, asking for permission to fell the *Yaku-sugi*. After a period of prayer, before setting about the work of cutting down a *Yaku-sugi* the men of the Island confined themselves in their own houses for five days and thereafter secluded themselves in the mountains for 20 days. The huge *Yaku-sugi* which now remains only in the form of the "Wilson Stump" must have

been cut down by such working men. The island inhabitants of old times adored the *Yaku-sugi* as "a tree in which God dwells," and the same goes for the inhabitants today, too, who have built a *torii*, the gate of a Shintō shrine, in front of the stump of this huge *Yaku-sugi*, and erected a shrine called "Kinotama Shrine" to the spirit of this *Yaku-sugi*.

There have been discovered many other Japanese cedars of this kind, which are as huge as the one named "Wilson Stump." The inhabitants boasting of them as their treasure, give special names to them whenever a big one is discovered.

The "*Ōiwa* (big rock) *sugi*" discovered in 1966 is 18.1 meters in circumference and is said to be 5,000 years old. The *sugi* named "*Dai-ō* (Great King)" is 41.7 meters in circumference at the base and 17 meters in diameter. Of such, the oldest and largest is the one named "*Jōmon* (strawrope pattern) *sugi*" which is 43 meters in circumference at the base, and would you believe it, its age is estimated at 7,000!

We can guess from the strawrope pattern pottery discovered on this Island that the approximate time when people settled there goes back to quite ancient days perhaps even to the *Jōmon* Period which covers the period from 8,000 B.C. to 200 B.C. The *Jōmon sugi* had existed on this Island long before the people began to settle there. Therefore after the first residents arrived a careful and detailed history of the island's trees began in earnest.

At the Regional Forestory Office in Anbō, on the Island of Yakushima, has been kept a flat piece of wood cut off from the *Yaku-sugi*. When investigating the rings of the tree, we can easily trace the growth of the tree against our own history and we can see from the age rings that while the tree was growing human beings have gone through various ranges of experience and events. The rings of this sample of wood number 1,776! Quite a lot of history has occurred during this time. About 500 years after this tree put forth buds, the History of Japan recorded the Taika Reform. When cut down in 1956, it had grown up to have a diameter of about 2 meters and it had reached the grand old age of 1,776.

The soil of the Island of Yakushima is sterile, and very rocky. In this Island, therefore, many

The main industry of the island is forestry and the making of good quality wood from the 1,000 to 3,000 year old cedars.
There is a distinction between the trees in the islanders' vocabulary. The trees not over 1,000 years old are called the "little ones" and the ones over that are called the "real" yaku-cedars.

more years than in other places are needed for a cedar to grow to a great size. Moreover, the older it becomes, the slower it grows. Where the rings are very close, a width as long as 3.5 millimeters often indicates as many as one hundred years. Professor Manabe of Kyūshū University who did some careful studies of the rings of the *Yaku-sugi* has worked out, from the scar marks on the rings, that a maximum wind velocity of 39 meters per hour, a momentary wind velocity of 55 meters per hour, and a central atmospheric pressure of 921 millibars, occurred in connection with the storm which broke out on the occasion of the Mongol Invasion in 1274, one of the most famous events in the history of Japan.

The *Yaku-sugi* can well be considered as living evidence of history as well as natural phenomena.

"It rains without stopping for 35 days a month" goes the saying here to describe the unusually heavy rainfalls.
The amount of rain in the mountainous regions of the island exceed 10,000 mm. This rainfall comes streaming down from the heights into many rivers and valleys creating beautiful sights.

Precious Wood—Yaku-sugi

THE WOOD OF *Yaku-sugi* has been highly prized from old times as material for buildings and the industrial arts. In old times, in any house like a fine mansion that was built in Japanese style, the ceiling was covered with the *Yaku-sugi* wood and about the room were placed household furniture like a desk and a *tsuitate* (single-leaf screen) that were also made of that wood.

The wood of *Yaku-sugi*, compared with ordinary cedar wood, is more rot resistant and bears up under longer use, for it is six times as oily as the ordinary kind. So, the surface of this wood takes on a peculiar brown color. The *Urasenké*, the largest school of tea ceremony in Japan, keeps a tea-shelf made of the *Yaku-sugi* wood. The school's eleventh master Gengensai once had the chance to obtain an oblong chest made of this wood, and attracted by its beauty, he instantly ordered it made into a tea-shelf. A 100 years later, even at present, this tea-shelf remains quite beautiful, with that glossy brown color peculiar to the *Yaku-sugi* wood.

The fact that the *Yaku-sugi* wood has so far attracted the attention of so great a number of people is attributed, above all, to the mys-

teriously beautiful grains it has.

As the *Yaku-sugi* has grown on rocky mountains situated along the approach through which typhoons pass, and continued to be tortured by storms and heavy rains for hundreds and thousands of years, it is no wonder that the unimaginably complex grains are left on its wood. According to the shape of their patterns, the grains are popularly named *tama-moku* (gem pattern grains), *sasa-moku* (bamboo-grass pattern grains), or *mai-budō* (entangled-grapevine pattern grains). The patterns typical of the *Yaku-sugi* wood are "wave rings in the water" and "ripples", which are called "*nami-mon-yō-moku*" and "*seiren-moku*", respectively. Not a few people have so far been charmed by the beauty of the grain patterns of this wood.

A sculptor Kaji Hōun wandered from one place to another throughout the country, testing various woods, and finally went to the Island of Yakushima, where he came upon the *Yaku-sugi* wood. Greatly charmed by it, he now chooses only this wood as the material for his carving.

Moreover, Awaji Chikusai who lives in Ōji, Tokyo, is also a man possessed of the *Yaku-sugi* wood. Seventy-seven years old, he is the only man in Japan who takes an interest in carving the *Yaku-sugi* wood by the method called "mebori," which is the technique with which the grains are to be brought in relief with the rest of the area of the piece being worked with. When such woods as the *Yaku-sugi* which have very beautiful grains are carved with this method the grains will stand out in bold relief, thereby creating excellent patterns. The work is simple, but once he drops his concentration at any point when carving a piece of wood, all the work will go for nothing because the pattern will be marred. This is really work that requires tenacity and patience. It takes several years to make even one desk this way. It is impossible to evaluate the cost of labor involved in his work. He never sells a *byōbu* or a desk he has made after several years of hard and tenacious labor. All he makes are dedicated to Shintō shrines or Buddhist temples. He says, "I will keep on carving with this *Yaku-sugi* wood, the best wood in the world, as long as I live, even though I am called 'a madman.' "

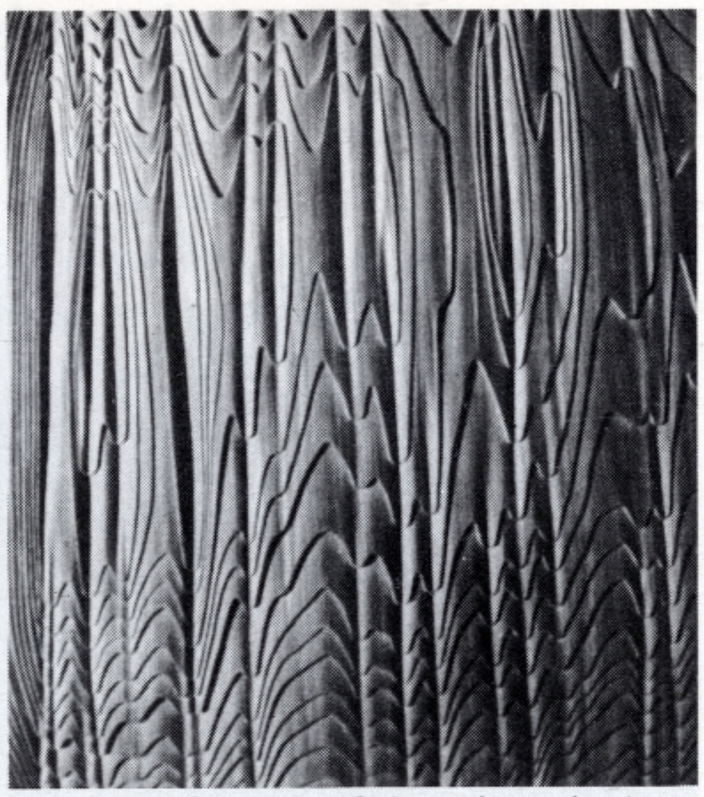
There are some trees which appear to be dead because of their great age, but which are very much alive. They will not fall, and continue to live within their ancient bark.

The famous Wilson stump measures 32.5 meters at the base and is said to be 3,000 years old. The cave inside has an area of 16 square meters.

The attitudes of the people who highly value the *Yaku-sugi* wood are the same now as in old times. In the Edo Period, the Satsuma Clan which ruled over the Island of Yakushima ordered its inhabitants to pay their taxes in the *Yaku-sugi* wood rather than rice, for a rice crop was never really practical there. It is told that, after being cut down in the mountains, the *Yaku-sugi* used for taxes was not carried on floats but converted into lumber with a 10 centimeter thickness and a length of more than 1 meter. Each piece of wood was then carefully carried away from the mountains

on each of the people's backs. Then, such pieces were sent as far as Kyōto and Osaka and in this way became one of the important source of revenue for the Satsuma Clan. Buildings made of such *Yaku-sugi* wood which went through that laborious human processing method can still be seen in many places throughout Japan.

The *Sekisui-in*, a building desisnated as a Japanese national treasure, within the compound of the Kōzanji Temple, located in Kyoto, was built as the alms of the ex-Emperor Gotoba to Saint Myō-e in 1222. Floor board of that building are made of *Yaku-sugi* wood.



The beautiful grain of the yaku-cedar is unique among Japanese cedar trees. There is no other wood in the world which has such a beautiful grain; this is due to the special climatic conditions which have contributed to its growth.

Mr. Awaji Chikusai a well-known wood sculptor mentioned before he died this year that the yaku-cedar is the world's best for sculpting in the style which the Japanese call mebori. The picture shows a work of Mr. Awaji into which he poured all of his talented efforts.

Everybody can see the floor as soon as one enters with its weird vortex pattern of grains. This floor board is a particular eye-catcher because of the grain patterns. The wood making this floor board must have come all the way from the Island of Yakushima to Kyōto through strong winds and violent waves. Even at present, about 750 years thereafter, it is far from rotten and remains almost in the same condition as at that time.

On the Island of Yakushima, the *Yaku-sugi* is still being cut down. At the timber place are always piles of gigantic *Yaku-sugi*, and people working there are busy with shipment. According to a survey by the Regional Forestry Office, the number of *Yaku-sugi* currently in the Island is approximately 150,000, including small ones which are less than 1,000 years old, of which 60,000 are scheduled to be cut down.

Most of the *Yaku-sugi* cut down are to be carried out of the Island. Those of more than 1,000 years old are all recognized as precious woods and terribly expensive; at the market price, several tens of million yen are paid for a whole timber and a million and some hundred thousand yen per each cubic meter. Because of the expense, the *Yaku-sugi* has so far been used mainly for fittings and handiworks rather than as materials for buildings. In recent years, however, most of the *Yaku-sugi* have been used for ceilings, after it is changed into the form of plywood. Even though cut thin like a sheet of paper, the grains on the wood still show the dignity that lies in a tree of 1,000 years of age. The *Yaku-sugi* is a precious tree, which the special climate and geographical conditions of the Island of Yakushima can only produce. Truely, it is one of Japan's greatest prides. 東

Shōtoku Taishi
A Man of All Seasons

by Yonekura Isamu

Portrait of Shōtoku Taishi (center) and his two sons. (Possession of the Imperial Household Agency).

About twenty kilometers south of the city of Nara lies a peaceful village surrounded by paddy fields. Named Asuka (明日香), this small village, and the immediate vicinity, became the center of Japanese politics and culture from the sixth through the seventh centuries when both the Imperial Family and other powerful clans resided here. Shōtoku Taishi, whom we will now introduce, played the leading role upon this stage.

Shōtoku Taishi's name is perhaps the best known and familiar personage among all the actors appearing on the stage of Japanese history. His likeness appears on the highest denominational notes, first the five thousand yen note and then with the appearance of the new ten thousand yen note on it as well. Furthermore, Shōtoku Taishi is today acclaimed as the greatest personage in Japanese history. Shōtoku Taishi not only restored the authority of the Imperial House at a critical juncture of time when the forces of powerful clans who had been its subordinates were attempting to gain the upper hand, but he also left a distinguished list of achievements that include establishing a new political system and bringing about the development of Buddhist culture in Japan.

However Shōtoku Taishi himself seemed to have felt his remarkable achievements to have been empty; to have been to no avail.

As the opening installment of a new series on personalities in Japanese history, this issue introduces Shōtoku Taishi, a statesman and thinker who endured alone the fate of a wise man who towered above the events of his age.

Kami vs. Buddha

During the fourth century, the Yamato Court, the central government organization that ruled Yamato region (present day Nara Prefecture), unified nearly all of Japan. With the passing of time, the Court developed into a mighty institution, still centered in the Yamato region, with the Emperor as the ruler and the officials from the powerful clans as his administrators. Particularly during the fifth century, the Court's power reached one of its peaks. The magnificent Imperial tomb of the Emperor Nintoku, who reigned at this time, speaks eloquently of the Court's glory. This key-hole shaped tomb, located in present day Sakai City, Ōsaka, is the largest burial mound in the world: the diameter of the upper circle is 245 meters, the width of the lower rectangle is 300 meters, and surrounding the whole circumferance are three moats.

However, the period from the latter half of the fifth century to the beginning of the sixth witnessed a struggle within the Imperial Family over the successor to the throne. Powerful clans joined the fray, taking sides with one faction or the other within the Imperial Family. Some of these minority clans gained power and influence that led to the steady decline of the Imperial House's power. Most remarkable of these clans and the direct cause of the deteriorating position of the Imperial House was the Soga clan. Leaders of the Soga clan, as the Ōomi (大臣, the title of the highest administrative position under the Emperor), held full control over the finances of the court; moreover through the political marriage of their daughters generation after generation into the Imperial Family, the Soga clan was able to attain authority and grasp the reigns of power through their strength on the maternal side of the Imperial Family. This they used to steadily increase their own clan's authority until it surpassed that of the Imperial House itself. Also during this period, fighting broke out on the Korean Peninsula among the states of Silla (*Shiragi*), Paikché (*Kudara*) and Kōkuli (*Kōkuri*) cuasing large numbers of educated immigrants to flee to Japan. This influx of people from the continent, along with the culture that they brought with them, drew the attention of the powerful clans in Japan. The Soga clan, for example, was particularly interested in the Buddhist culture of the Kingdom of Paikché. Thus knowledgeable of the situation on the Korean Peninsula, as well as that of China itself, the Soga clan moved to progressively absorb this advanced continental civilization, particularly the Buddhistic elements, entrusting to it the future of Japan.

Vying with the Soga was the Mononobe clan. Heads of this illustrious clan served the Imperial Family from the time of the first Emperor Jinmu and continued to do so serve up to the time of Shōtoku Taishi, chiefly in the hereditary office in charge of military affairs, with the title of Ōmuraji (大連 the highest administrative position after Ōomi). Unlike their rivals the Sogas, the Mononobe clan leaders advocated the expulsion of Buddhism from Japan.

In 538, an envoy from the King of Paikché presented Buddhist images, ritual implements and scriptures to the Yamato Court. This marks the beginning of the official transmission of Buddhism to Japan (referred to by the special term *Bukkyō Kōden*). But even before this official introduction of Buddhism we can conjecture that the immigrants from the Korean Peninsula had already unofficially brought Buddhism with them as their personal religious belief. We also know that before the official transmission by way of the King of Paikché, Emperor Kinmei, curious about the Buddhist religion, ques-

The tranquil villages of the Asuka district used to be the center of Japan as well as the stage of some turbulent history from around 6th—7th centuries onward.

tioned his ministers about it.

Debate arose in the highest circles of the court over the pro's and cons of this new foreign faith. Ōomi Soga no Inamé advocated for the worship of Buddhism with the question:

> All of the countries to the west of Japan worship the Buddhist faith. Why does only Japan go against this tendency?

In response, Ōmuraji Mononobé no Okoshi retorted with this cry for the expulsion of the foreign faith:

> Here in Japan we have the time honored custom of worshipping and celebrating throughout the year all the many *kami* (here used to mean indigenous Japanese dieties) that reside on the earth and in the heavens. If we now begin to worship foreign dieties (i.e. Buddhas) we will surely call down upon us the wrath of *kunitsukami* (the kami or dieties of Japan)!

Thus the two highest ministers in the court stood diametrically opposed on the Buddhist issue. Emperor Kinmei tried to avoid a direct confrontation with either side by side stepping the issue of whether to accept or reject the foreign faith by adopting the following ploy: he presented to the Soga clan, as an individual, the Buddhist images, ritual objects and scriptures. Thus he skirted the issue. Soga no Inamé placed these images in one of his houses in Asuka. Later he converted it into a temple where he enshrined and worshipped these Buddhas. Thus Soga no Inamé became the first known Japanese convert to Buddhism. Such a display of favor toward Buddhism by members of the influential Soga clan gave great encouragement to the immigrants from China and Korea who had been following their Buddhist faith without official sanction. Many of these immigrants, some of who became quite wealthy while others served the court as men of letters and the arts, increased their support and trust of the Soga clan.

Distribution of political power at this time when both top ministers, the Ōomi and the Ōmuraji, acted together to run the administration, was split into two over the problem of accepting or rejecting Buddhism. However, with open Soga backing of the foreign faith, many of the immigrant clans, who had all along supported the Mononobé clan, began to turn away from their former ally thus further weakening the Mononobé's position for expelling Buddhism.

But the anti-Buddhist forces were not through yet. About one year after the Soga clan had enshrined and begun to worship their Buddhist images, an epidemic spread across the Yamato region leaving thousands of people stricken and dead in its wake. Anti-Buddhist elements headed by the Mononobé clan and its allies (including many who were in hereditary positions presiding over religious ceremonies and festivals for the Imperial House) immediately lay the blame for the epidemic on the Soga clan's wor-

ship of the foreign Buddha. Pro-Buddhist elements countered by finding the fault for the plague in the insolence of those who denied and wished to expel Buddhism. And there the matter rested.

Then Soga no Inamé died in March of 570 giving the Mononobé clan the opportunity they had awaited. Immediately they attacked the temple of the now critically weakened Soga clan, burned the Buddha Hall and threw the Buddhas presented by the king of Paikché into a canal in Naniwa (an old name for the Ōsaka area). Umako, succeeding his father Inamé as head of the Soga clan waited for the right moment to recoup the position of the pro-Buddhist faction. Meanwhile, Mononobé no Okoshi died leaving his son to take over the position of Ōmuraji. Now the conflict that had grown up between the fathers had been passed unabated to their sons. Then when Emperor Kinmei passed away the following year in 571, Bidatsu ascended to the throne as Emperor.

This, generally, outlines the situation of the Yamato Court up to the birth of our hero, Shōtoku Taishi.

Imperial House in Crisis

In 574 when the daughter of the former Emperor Kinmei was walking around the palace in Asuka, she effortlessly gave birth to a baby boy near the doorway to the stables. Hence this prince was named *Umayado no Miko* (厩戸皇子), or Prince Umayado (Umayado means stable door) because of the place he was born; later he would become familiar to everyone under the popular name Shōtoku Taishi, or just plain Taishi. Taishi's father was the son of the then Emperor Bidatsu; his mother was his father's step sister. (During this period consanguineous marriage was fairly common within the Imperial House.) Moreover, both his father and mother were directly related to the powerful Soga clan.

During Shōtoku Taishi's childhood, the tone of the conflict between the Imperial Family and the powerful clans became more and more strident. First, Soga no

The great principal image of Buddha, Asuka Daibutsu at Hōkōji Temple, built by the powerful Buddhist Soga clan. (Possession of the Ango-in Temple of Asuka village)

Umako, the Ōomi, continued devoting his energies to the favorable acceptance of Buddhist culture brought from Paikché, Silla and Kōkuli. In 585, the Soga clan gathered enough support from the other immigrant clans to build on their own land the first Buddhist pagoda in Japan. Three daughters from the supporting clans were selected to become nuns and serve in the Buddha Hall.

Ōmuraji Mononobé no Moriya, leader of the anti-Buddhist forces, seizing upon the fact that the epidemic had not yet abated, petitioned the Emperor Bidatsu that the plague would not be checked until Buddhism was expelled. Having thus persuaded the Emperor and received his sanction, the Mononobé clan attacked the Soga's pagoda, pulled it down, burned the Buddha Hall and threw the images that had been enshrined there into a river; on top of this they also imprisoned the three nuns who had been serving in the Buddha Hall.

But the Mononobé clan's attack did not bring the epidemic to a halt. In fact the sickness and dying worsened, and the cause was widely held to be the Mononobé's wanton destruction of the Soga's temple and the imprisonment of the three nuns. Criticism arose against Emperor Bidatsu's policy of expelling the Buddhist religion. During this period both the Emperor Bisatsu and Soga no Umako fell ill. The Soga clan then petitioned the Emperor to allow them to convert to the Buddhist faith as a means of gaining the recovery of Umako. While Bidatsu would not go so far as that, in conciliation he did release the three imprisoned nuns and also allowed Umako alone to convert to Buddhism.

Umako finally managed to recover but Emperor Bidatsu unexpectedly passed away. Popular opinion held that Umako's recovery was a blessing of his revered Buddha, while the Emperor's death was clearly a result of his efforts to stamp out the Buddhist religion. The Soga clan's political position now began to grow more advantageous for some of the clans which had all along supported the anti-Buddhist Mononobé clan now started to withdraw their support in light of these new considerations. This in turn added new strain to the already tense relationship between the leaders of the two clans. The following story may help clarify this. During the Emperor Bidatsu's funeral, Soga no Umako went up before the de-

ceased spirit, dressed inappropriately with a long sword at his side, and praised the achievements of his former sovereign. When his rival Mononobé no Moriya saw this, he laughed derisively saying, "He looks like a sparrow with an arrow stuck in him."

Then when Mononobé no Moriya next went up before the spirit of the deceased, he could not keep his arms and legs from trembling. Retorted the Soga leader, "If you were to hang a small bell on him it should no doubt ring quite well."

Always each was looking for the other's weak point.

Emperor Yōmei, Shotoku Taishi's father and the kid brother of the deceased Bidatsu, next ascended the throne. (Note here that unlike today when the line of succession runs from father to son, at that time in the Imperial Family a brother was given preference.) Yōmei, unlike previous emperors, viewed Buddhism not merely as a bystander but announced his own conversion to the faith and discussed the pro and cons of adopting the religion officially with his advisors. But deliberation dragged on and before a conclusion could be reached, Emperor Yōmei suddenly died after only one year on the throne.

Even before Yōmei's funeral services had been concluded, fighting broke out between the Soga and Mononobé clans over the choice of his successor. The decisive battle between the two powerful clans end with an overwhelming Soga victory and the total demise of the Mononobé. Legend relates that during this fighting, Shōtoku Taishi, then only fourteen years old, took part on the side of the Soga clan. Tradition further states that he vowed, "If we are allowed victory over our enemy the Mononobé, I vow to erect a temple and pagoda dedicated to the Shi-Tennō (the four heavenly dieties)."

Their strongest opponent defeated, the Soga clan was now free to go on to construct what amounted to an autocracy in the political sphere. In the following year, 588, Paikché sent at Umako's request a *busshari* (a reliquary containing the bones of the Buddha), priests, architects, painters and even a model of a temple. Umako demolished one of his own houses in Asuka and had the artisans from Paikché commence building the first full fledged temple compound in Japan. (This temple, known as Hōkō-ji 法興寺, reached completion nine years later.)

The power and arrogance of the Soga reached its peak during this period. For example, one year before construction on Hōkō-ji began (i.e. 587). Emperor Sushun, supported by the Soga clan, ascended to the throne. But the Emperor, highly displeased at what he considered the steadily worsening arrogance of the Soga, one day during the fifth year of his reign vented his feelings. Pointing at a wild boar that had been presented to him, the Emperor exclaimed, "One day I shall cut up those who displease me just as the neck of this wild boar has been slit!"

When Soga no Umako heard of the incident, he summoned one of his faithful immigrant retainers (named Yamato no Ayanokoma) and had him slay the Emperor. That same day, he had the sovereign buried. Assassination of the Emperor by one of the clans, topped off by his burial that very same day, was unprecedented. It made obvious to everyone the dangerous position of the Imperial House. Shōtoku Taishi, only nineteen years old at the time, was certainly greatly shocked by this incident in which his own relatives the Soga had assassinated the Emperor who was his own uncle. Nor could the incident have failed to indicate the severity of the break between the Soga clan and the Imperial House.

Taishi's Debut

Upon the death of Emperor Sushun, his younger sister Suiko, who was Shōtoku Taishi's aunt, ascended the throne in 592 as the first Japanese empress. That next year, the Imperial Family instituted the rank of Imperial Crown Prince (the designated successor to the throne) to assure the line of succession in the unlikely event that another such tragedy should happen. Shōtoku Taishi, precocious from childhood and a superior student of Buddhism and Confucianism, was put forward as the new Crown Prince. But more than being just the designated successor to the throne, his position also officially included assisting the Emperor (or Empress) in a capacity of minister of state. This served to put binds on the above mentioned political tyranny by the Ōomi and Ōmuraji, and enabled the Imperial Family to recover much of the political authority they had previously lost.

Now Shōtoku Taishi, as the new Crown Prince, had to deal with the danger to the Imperial House as his own problem. Urgent reform of the political system headed by the Emperor, as ruler, and the Ōomi, assisting as chief administrator, which was in complete chaos due to Emperor Sushun's assassination, now depended upon the abilities of the twenty year old Shōtoku Taishi. But this was not all. Also to be grappled with were such diverse problems as implementing a new policy with regard to the ever more popular Buddhist religion which was then supported chiefly by the Soga with support of

the immigrant clans, reorganizing the lines of power so that the influential clans came more under the Emperor's control, as well as rearranging the channels of foreign intercourse with the countries of the Korea Peninsula by removing them from the exclusive province of the Soga clan.

One year after Shōtoku Taishi became Crown Prince, Buddhism began to flourish when it received the official blessing of the Emperor in the form of an Imperial Declaration (Mikotonori, 詔) stating that He, the Emperor, deeply venerated the *Sanpō* (三宝, the Three Treasures of Buddhism— 1. the Buddha, 2. the Law (or Dharma) and 3. the Monastic Order). This Mikotonori moved Buddhism into the open for the first time since it had been brought into the country by immigrants from the continent and adhered to privately by the Soga and their allies. Taishi aimed at eliminating the infighting within political circles and creating a reformed nation by making the Buddhist spirit the keynote for his new government.

Wishing his father, Shōtoku Taishi, to recover from an illness, his son Yamashiro-no-Ōe-no-Ō engaged the most noted sculptor of Buddhist images of the time Tori Busshi to make the Shaka-sanzon-Zō. This is a masterpiece of Asuka sculpture and is enshrined in the Hōryūji Temple.

Taishi discerned that because Buddhism was a synthesis of advanced scholarly learning, art and science from the mainland, a flourishing Buddhist faith would act as an impetus for overall cultural progress in his own land. With the active support of the powerful pro-Buddhist clans, temples were erected throughout the Asuka area. Strange and exotic tribute gifts such as peacocks and camels, as well as the more usual painters, architects, muscians and of course priests all made their way to the Japanese court from the three kingdoms on the Korea Penisula.

Shōtoku Taishi, of naturally scholarly bent, zealously studied Buddhist scriptures under both Priest Eji (恵慈) from Kōkuli and Priest Esō (慧聡) from Paikché. Taishi astounded them both with his profound mastery of their teachings. In fact so well did Taishi grasp the scriptures that he himself even lectured Empress Suiko on certain Buddhist texts. But Taishi went beyond merely gulping down the scriptural interpretations expounded by the venerable priests of China and Korea. As both a statesman and a thinker, he worked out his own interpretations for some of the scriptures.

A look at three sutra commentaries ascribed to Shōtoku Taishi may help to clarify this point. These three are the Hoke-Kyō

Gisho (Commentary on the Hoke-Kyō, or Lotus Sutra), Yuima-Kyō Gisho (Commentary on the Yuima-Kyō, or Sutra of Vimalakirti) and Shōman-Kyō Gisho (Commentary on the Shōman-Kyō, or Sutra of Queen Srimàla). For example, while in India, the home of Buddhism, the act of bestowing alms to a monk practicing asceticism was far more meritous or virtuous (*Kudoku*, a translation of Guna) than bestowing goods to an ordinary poor beggar, Taishi denied such a distinction claiming that in either case the kudoku was exactly the same. Furthermore, he also taught that venerating the Buddha and loving the poor had the same amount of kudoku. Many of Taishi's interpretations of the scriptures emphasized particularly service to one's society (altruistic acts or acts for the sake of others). For example, where the Lotus Sutra records, "Always practice *Zazen* (or silent meditation)," Taishi modified this to state in effect "Do not be like one who always practices silent meditation." His reason: "One who always practices only silent meditation cannot carry out altruistic deeds." Again on the subject of "Charity," perhaps the most important of all Buddhist virtues, Taishi put forth his own interpretation.

So fundamental is this virtue in India that there Buddhist thinkers praised not only giving up your fortune, but also your nation, your home, your family and even your own life for the sake of others. Taishi, on the other hand, restricted the meaning of "Charity" to "Abandoning all possessions other than your own life." Such original interpretations by Shōtoku Taishi stand at the forefront of the Japanese assimilation of the Buddhist religion.

While Taishi's policy encouraging the growth of Buddhism was limited mainly to the Asuka region, it caused a flowering of Buddhist culture, including painting, sculpture and architecture, that exhibits the influence of not only China and Korea but also that of far away central Asia, India and Afganistan. During this period the predecessors to Hōryū-ji, today the world's oldest wooden structure, were constructed in the Asuka region. The whole cultural milieu that grew up at this time around the Yamato Court is referred by art historians as the Asuka Culture.

This huge stone in Asuka district is said to mark the grave of Umako of the powerful Soga clan.

Seventeen-Article Constitution

Shōtoku Taishi also initiated reforms of the political system. At that time the government at the Yamato Court was administrated by officials with inherited titles and ranks. Thus if a person were born into a respectable family that held an official rank, he would eventually succeed to that office regardless of his individual abilities. Hence to strengthen the Emperor's position by giving the throne control over appointment of government officials based on ability, Taishi did away with the system of heredlitary ranks and introduced in its place the *Kan-i Jūni Kai* System (*Kan* means cap and *i* means rank, thus literally a cap rank system with twelve grades). This Kan-i System divided the grades of officials (excluding only those at the very top) into twelve grades, determined on the basis of ability, with each rank signified by the color of its cap. This was an epoch-making reform at that time for instead of a system based on hereditary succession, a system was introduced that would enable any individual to rise in position commensurate with his talent and effort.

The names of the twelve ranks, which are derived from Confucian ideals follow in descending order:

Rank	*Translation*
Dai-toku	Greater Virtue
Shō-toku	Lesser Virtue
Dai-nin	Greater Benevolence
Shō-nin	Lesser Benevolence
Dai-rei	Greater Decorum
Shō-rei	Lesser Decorum

Dai-shin	Greater Sincerity
Shō-shin	Lesser Sincerity
Dai-gi	Greater Righteousness
Shō-gi	Lesser Righteousness
Dai-chi	Greater Wisdom
Shō-chi	Lesser Wisdom

Each rank was signified by the color of its cap (with the greater and lesser ranks distinguished by dark and light shades):

Toku	Purple
Nin	Blue
Rei	Red
Shin	Yellow
Gi	White
Chi	Black.

Later, the clothing's color had to also match that of the cap.

In 604, one year after the establishment of the Kan-i system, Taishi formulated his famous "Seventeen-Article Constitution," which established moral standards and official regulations for the ruling classes. Selections from this constitution may give the clearest sense of the ideals Shōtoku Taishi held for government officials.

Reflecting upon the chaotic confrontations that had so often occurred in political circles up to his time, Taishi wanted to establish a universal nation that would eliminate such senselessness. Hence, first of all, he stressed "Wa," or Harmony, as the most important principle for a cooperative organization.

Article I.

Wa is to be valued and needless opposition to be avoided. This is most fundamental of all. All men harbor feelings of partisanship, and few can perceive the whole situation. Hence some disobey their lords and fathers, or fight with their neighbors. But if both those above and those below are harmonious and are able to discuss matters cordially, things will spontaneously reach accord. What then cannot be accomplished?

Clearly Taishi placed great emphasis on the concept of "Wa" making it he did the keynote for his whole Seventeen-Article Constitution. And even in Japan today this spirit of Wa remains very essential in the group activities that are so important part of Japanese society.

Article II.

Sincerely revere the *Sanpō,* the three treasures of Buddhism—the Buddha, the Dharma and the Monastic order. Here is to be found the final refuge for all living creature; the supreme standard to be venerated in all nations. No matter what the age, is there anyone who would not honor the Sanpō. Utterly wicked men are very rare. If once taught, they will follow its principles. Hence if we do not rely on the Sanpō, how can a wicked heart and evil behavior be corrected.

Here we notice the conception of a universal principle. Shōtoku Taishi (and the group of ministers below him) adopted Buddhism with the realization that it would provide a universal concept which all men should follow. Of the Three Treasures of Buddhism, Taishi lay greatest emphasis on the Law, believing that here was a standard for all living creatures; he further believed that the Buddha was, in fact, a manifestation of the Law.

We notice also in Article II that no man is completely wicked. This concept is very central to Buddhist thought, as well as particular to Oriental thought in general.

Nor should we forget that Taishi stressed the authority of the Emperor.

Article III.

When you receive an Imperial Command always receive it reverently. The Lord (Emperor) is the heaven; the subjects are the earth. Heaven covers and the earth supports. When we maintain this distinction, the four seasons turn properly and all things spontaneously unfold. If the earth were to cover the heavens only havoc would prevail. . . .

Regulations for government officials are stated as follows:

Article VIII.

All officials and functionaries shall attend work early and retire late. Official business leaves no room for laxness. Even if you work all day, everything that must cannot be accomplished. Accordingly, if you are late to work emergencies cannot be met; if you retire early necessary business can not be completed.

Article XV.

To turn away from private profit and work for the public—this is the path of the official. If a person has private motives, feelings of enmity for others are certain to arise. If one has feelings of enmity, one's activities will reflect the feelings of one's heart. If one does not act in harmony with one's heart, service to the public will be sacrified for the sake of one's own feelings. When feelings of enmity arise, one acts against the system and disobeys the laws.

Article XVII.

Important matters should not be decided by one person. They should always be discussed with many. But small matters are less important. One need not discuss them with others. Only when important matters arise, when there is a chance a mistake may be made should one discuss the proper course of action, so as to proceed reasonably.

Proud Statesman

TAISHI, HAVING initiated his reforms for the domestic political system, next turned his eyes toward the Asian continent to the west. Up to that time the Soga clan had had complete domination of the foreign relations with the kingdoms of the Korean Peninsula, concentrating particularly on Paikché. Taishi however realized that Paikché was beginning a period of decline and hence choose a new policy.

China, or more specifically the Sui Dynasty, was now the leading power on the East Asian continent. Foreign relations between China and Japan had been cut off now for about one hundred years, but now Taishi decided that in order to make Japan a stronger more advanced nation, it was essential to adopt the civilization and political system of China, the most developed nation in the region. Moreover, he thoroughly intended to insure a political advantage for the Emperor over the Ōomi, Soga no Umako.

Thus having resolved to open diplomatic relations with Sui China, Taishi sent an envoy to the Sui Court in 600. Although the facts remain unclear, Taishi dispatched Ono no Imoko (小野妹子) as an envoy again in 607. Imoko carried with him an official letter from Shōtoku Taishi that began "The Sun of Heaven where the sun rises dispatches a missive to the Sun of Heaven where the Sun sets. . . ." When the Sui Emperor Yang Di 煬帝 read this he was extremely offended and odered his subordinates to "ignore this letter because it was written by a rude, impertinate barbarian." (Or so it is recorded in the *Dynastic History of the Sui Dynasty*, 隋書.) Previously Japan had secured relations with China not as an equal partner, but essentially in the form of Japan paying tribute to China for the privilege of intercourse with China. But in spite of this, Taishi had sent an official letter to the Sui Emperor clearly indicating that he wanted to open relations with China as an equal. Within a historical perspective, Taishi's advances were truly extraordinary.

On the other hand, the Sui Emperor's reaction could not have been unexpected for the Chinese Emperor had traditionally considered himself to be the "Son of Heaven" who ruled over the "Middle Kingdom," or the "center of the world." Hence Yang Di, the Sui

The Kondō of the Hōryūji Temple.

The Yumedono (Dream Pavillion) of the Hōryūji Temple. In his later years Shōtoku Taishi withdrew to the Yumedono and devoted himself to meditation.

Chronology of Events

	A.D.	
	4th c.	National Unification under Yamato Court
	604	The 17-Article Constitution by Prince Shōtoku
	645	Taika Reform
	672	Jinshin Revolt
Nara Period (710-784)	710	Capital set up in Nara
	794	Capital moved to Kyōto
Heian Period (794-1185)	1180-5	Battles between Genji and Heikế clans
Kamakura Period (1192-1333)	1192	The Kamakura Shogunate of Minamoto no Yoritomo
	1274	Mongol Invasion
Muromachi Period (1336-1573)	1338	The Ashikaga Shogunate of Ashikaga Takauji
	1467-77	Ōnin Revolt
	1560	Battle at Okehazama
	1573	Oda Nobunaga unified the country
Momoyama Period (1568-1602)	1585	Oda Nobunaga replaced by Toyotomi Hideyoshi
	1592	Invasion of Korea
	1600	Battle at Sekigahara
Edo Period (1603-1867)	1603	The Tokugawa Shogunate by Tokugawa Ieyasu
	1637	Shimabara Revolt
	1639	Closure of the country to foreign commerce
	1702	Revenge by 47 loyal samurai for their master
	1837	Revolt of Ōshio Heihachiro
	1853	American Commodore Perry visited Japan
	1858	Japan-U.S. Amity & Commerce Treaty
Meiji Period (1868-1912)	1868	Meiji Restoration

Emperor wanted no part of these barbarians to the east. But at that juncture in time the Sui were having problems in Korea. Their plans to subdue Kōkuli were not going so smoothly and strategic considerations made it essential for the Sui to secure ties with Japan. Hence Yang Di opened negotiations with the court in Asuka.

When Ono no Imoko returned to Japan, the Sui Emperor dispatched an envoy to accompany him. Though Yang Di seemed to have no intentions to open official relations with Japan as an equal partner, for Shōtoku Taishi, whose aim was to import the continental culture, this was of little consequence. As far as he was concerned, all that mattered was that Japan did not appear in a servile position. When the Sui envoy returned to his homeland, Taishi again sent along Ono no Imoko. In addition he also had eight students to accompany his retinue. These same students were later to play important roles in implementing the great political reforms carried out after Taishi's death. Called the Taika Reform 大化の改新, this new policy established a centralized bureaucratic administration modelled after the Chinese *Ritsuryō* System (律令制度, or briefly a system based on a code of laws and ethics).

This Empty World

TAISHI'S REGENCY, begun in 593 when he was just twenty years old continued for about twenty years, but his most productive period covered the ten year interval from 601. After about 612, Taishi lost most of his interest in public affairs. His policies for strengthening the Imperial House and those for establishing and adjusting the diplomatic relations with the continent had been put into operation. Importation of the continental culture was going all a pace, with routes for cultural exchange set up through students and priests. Hence perhaps Taishi felt relaxed after having implemented those reforms he felt necessary; or

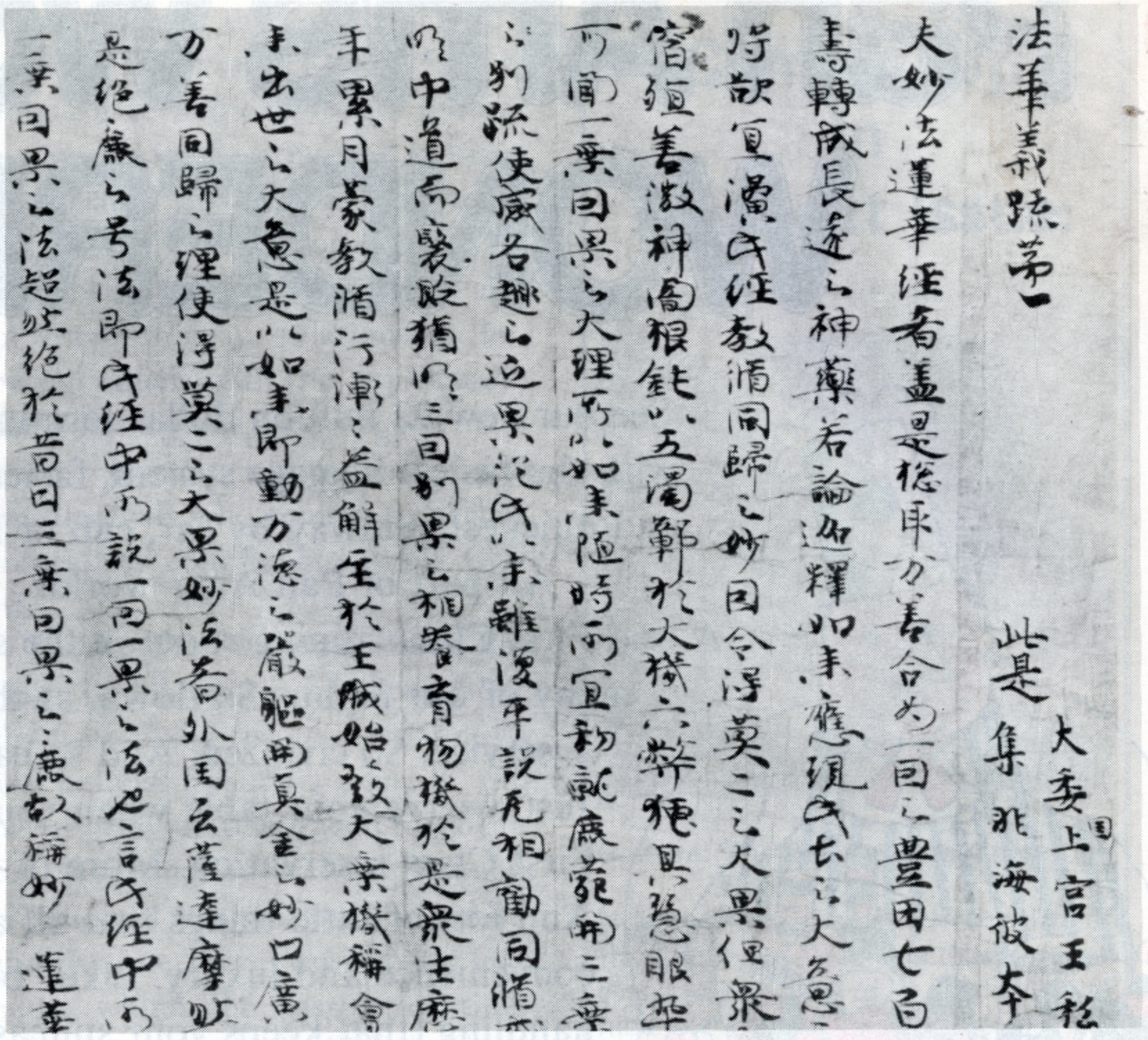
The Tachibana Temple which Shōtoku Taishi built in 606. (Asuka Village, Nara Prefecture.) The Prince is said to have given a lecture on the sutras here.

perhaps he may have felt that his regency government had run its course. But whatever the cause, Taishi turned his attention away from the affairs of the political world.

Today at the Hōryū-ji temple complex one can still see an octagonal shaped building called the Yumedono ("Hall of Dreams"). According to the eighth century Chinese priest Shitaku (思託) in his *Jōgū Kōtaishi Bosatsu Den (Traditions of Jōgū Kōtaishi Bosatsu*, Jōgū Kōtaishi is another name for Shōtoku Taishi), in his last years, Shōtoku Taishi "often entered the Yumedono and practiced silent meditation (zenjō 禅定)." Having grown tired of the mundane affairs of the world, Taishi would retreat to the Yumedono where he devoted himself to contemplation, quiet self-reflection, and perhaps communion with the Buddha (Hotoké).

Shōtoku Taishi's profound concern for Buddhism is an undeniable fact. His sutra commentaries and his Seventeen-Article Constitution clearly demonstrate this. But for Taishi, Buddhism was not merely an expedient that would serve as a unifying spirit for the establishment of a united country; nor was it only adopted as a vehicle to transmit the advanced continental culture to Japan. Taishi followed the Buddhist tenets because he believed them to be spiritual food that would nourish the human soul.

"This world is empty. Only the Buddha is True." Taishi supposedly spoke these words to Tachibana no Ōiratsumé, one of his three wives. This world, the world of man, the realm where Taishi worked so hard to carry out his reforms- now for Taishi had become empty, meaningless. Taishi believed that man's activities in this world were rooted in his earthly desires. But he also felt foolish mankind could find salvation through the Buddha.



"Hokké Gisho". Handwritten by Shōtoku Taishi; this is the explanatory annotation of the Buddhist Lotus Sutra. (Possession of the Imperial Household Agency)

Shōtoku Taishi, along with another of his wives, Kashiwadé no Ōiratsumé were taken sick to bed in January 622. His family prayed for their recovery and had an image of Shaka Buddha made which they enshrined in Hōryū-ji.

All was to no avail. On February 21 Kashiwadé no Ōiratsumé left the world. Taishi followed the very next day, as if pursuing his beloved wife. He was forty-nine years old. For his children he left the following admonition:

"Obstain from all evil and practice every kind of Goodness."

After Taishi's death, Tachibana no Ōiratsumé spoke to the Empress Suiko:

"Taishi once told me that the world is empty and only the Buddha is true. Now Taishi probably has been reborn in Tenju-Koku (天寿国, the Buddhist Paradise), a world invisible to our eyes. I would like to see how this world looks in a picture."

Empress Suiko, herself also feeling a longing for Taishi who was her own nephew, hence commanded the court ladies to have a hanging embroidery made showing the realm of Taishi's new life. Thus did the immigrant artisans serving the court come to make such an embroidery. Today, the Tenjukoku Mandara Embroidery (designated as a National Treature), preserved in the Chūgū-ji, a temple said to have been built by Taishi for his mother and located just to the east of Hōryū-ji, is said to be that same embroidery.

****

Upon the death of Shōtoku Taishi, who had acted as a buffer between Empress Suiko and Ōomi Soga no Umako, the confrontation between these two surfaced. With Taishi gone, Umako took over the

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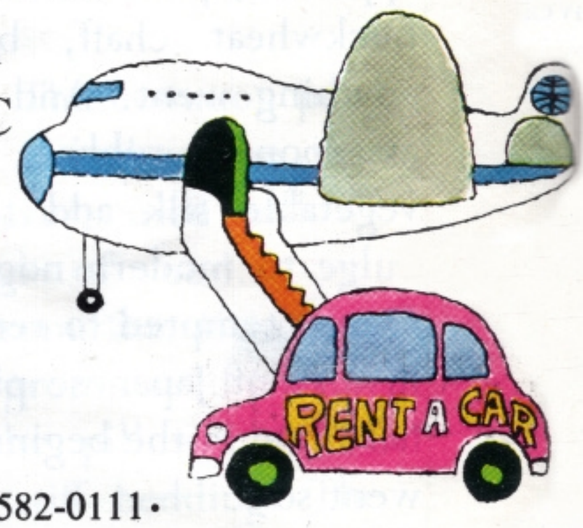

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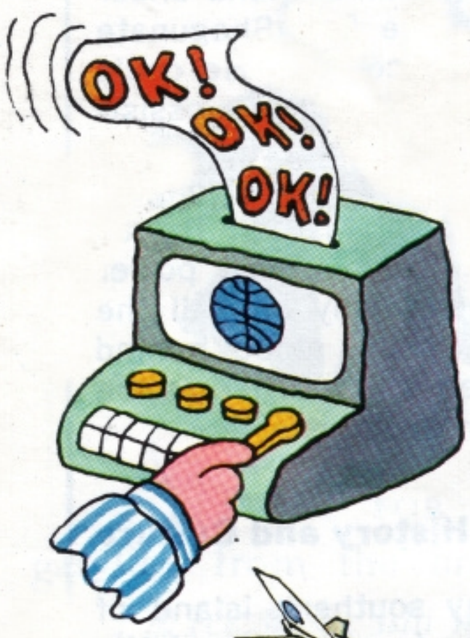

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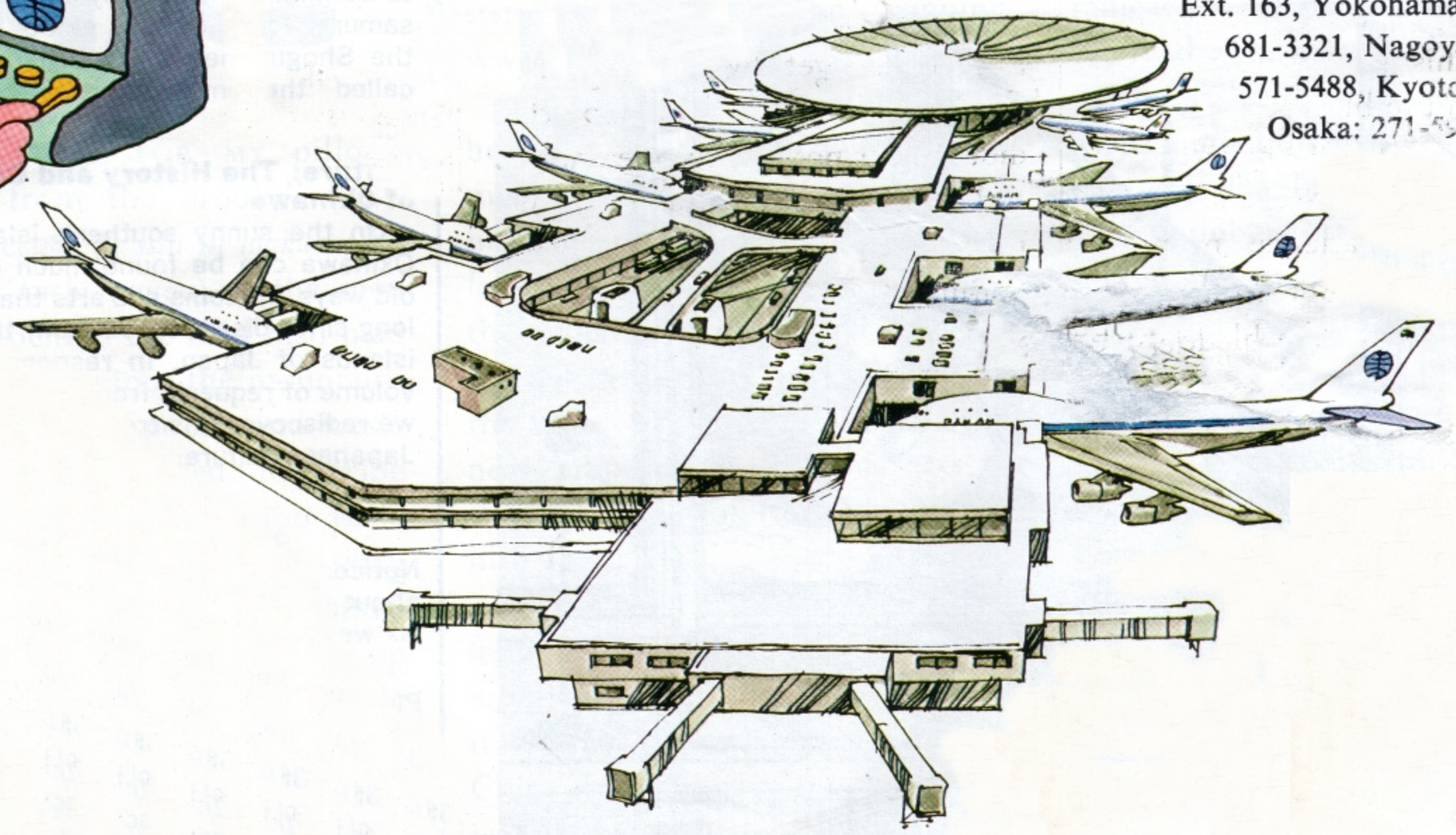

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role of chief administrator and there was no one to keep him in check.

Twenty years after Taishi's passing, things came to a critical pass between Taishi's eldest son Yamashiro no Ōenoō (山背大兄王) and Ōomi Soga no Emishi (Umako's son) over the problem of the Empress's successor and the former's blunt criticism of the Soga clan's despotism. In 643, the arrogant Emishi ordered two of his subordinate clans to attack Yamashiro no Ōenoō at his residence in Ikaruga (located north of Asuka). Taken completely by surprise, the people of Taishi's family had no time to muster military support from their allies and had to flee to nearby Mount Ikoma. The attackers burnt down the palace (the same palace that Taishi had constructed in Asuka in 605 and, after having been moved from Asuka, which Taishi's family continued to live in). Yamashiro no Ōenoō, who also fled with the rest of his family to Mount Ikoma, now had to recognize the reality that he had absolutely no influential supporters. He stood isolated within the Yamato Court. Only one course of action remained.

He left his refuge on Mount Ikoma accompanied by his family and entered the Hōryū-ji temple compound. There inside a pagoda surrounded by the Soga forces, Yamashiro no Ōenoō, his wife and children (numbering more than ten in all) committed suicide by hanging themselves. Hence twenty years after Taishi's death, his immediate descendants had perished and the whole family extinquished.

Before even one century had passed, Shōtoku Taishi began being venerated. First during the Nara Period (the eighth century), the ruling classes and the intellectuals (consisting mainly of priests), who worked to further promote the assimilation of the continental culture of China and Korea, had to relevaluate Shōtoku Taishi both as a pioneer in elevating the cultural standard of Japan and as the leading spirit for the propagation of Buddhism. Moreover, Taishi's aim of establishing a relationship between equals with the Sui Dynasty served as a great encouragement to those Japanese bureaucrats and intellectuals who tended to harbor inferiority complexes toward China.

During the following Heian Period, Buddhism spread throughout the land giving rise to various cults and beliefs. In such a context, the belief grew up that Taishi had been the reincarnation of Kuze Kannon (Kannon of World Salvation). Also at this time there arose many legends, which the passing of time only served to embellish further. One such tale relates how when Tashi was only two years old he joined his hands in prayer and facing the east incanted "Namu Butsu" (南無仏, Glory to the Buddha); another legend tells how he could clearly distinquish and correctly answer the appeals of ten supplicants at once.

After the twelfth century representations of Taishi appeared in painting and sculpture; Taishi-eden (paintings depicting events in the life of Taishi) and biographies were also popular. Taishi became more than human. Each age produced its own particular image of the revered Taishi. But always at the core of Taishi's images, no matter what the age, lay the sincere man who had passed the greater half of his life as the brilliant regent of the Empress Suiko, while holding no political ambitions for himself; as the man who became a devoted believer of Buddhism and who always pondered deeply the meaning of life. 東

Coming Up in the Next Issue:

Culture: The Beauty of Japanese Masks
Noh masks represent the zenith of the beauty of Japanese masks. However masks began as an implement to hide the human face --- the faces of those who served the kami. Here we examine the way Japanese think about masks.

People: The Craft of Making Go Boards
We have already introduced some of the rules of playing the game of Go. Now we will tell you about Go boards, Go stones and the craftsmen who make them.

History: Emperor Kanmu
Here is the first Emperor of the Heian Period, the Emperor Kanmu who moved the capital of Japan from Nara to Kyōto and commenced an age of aristocratic culture that continued 400 years.

Industrial Sociology: Japanese Diligence
Foreigners often say, either straight forwardly, or perhaps with a bit of sarcasm, how diligent the Japanese are. Here the author examines this "diligence" with particular regard to economic activities.

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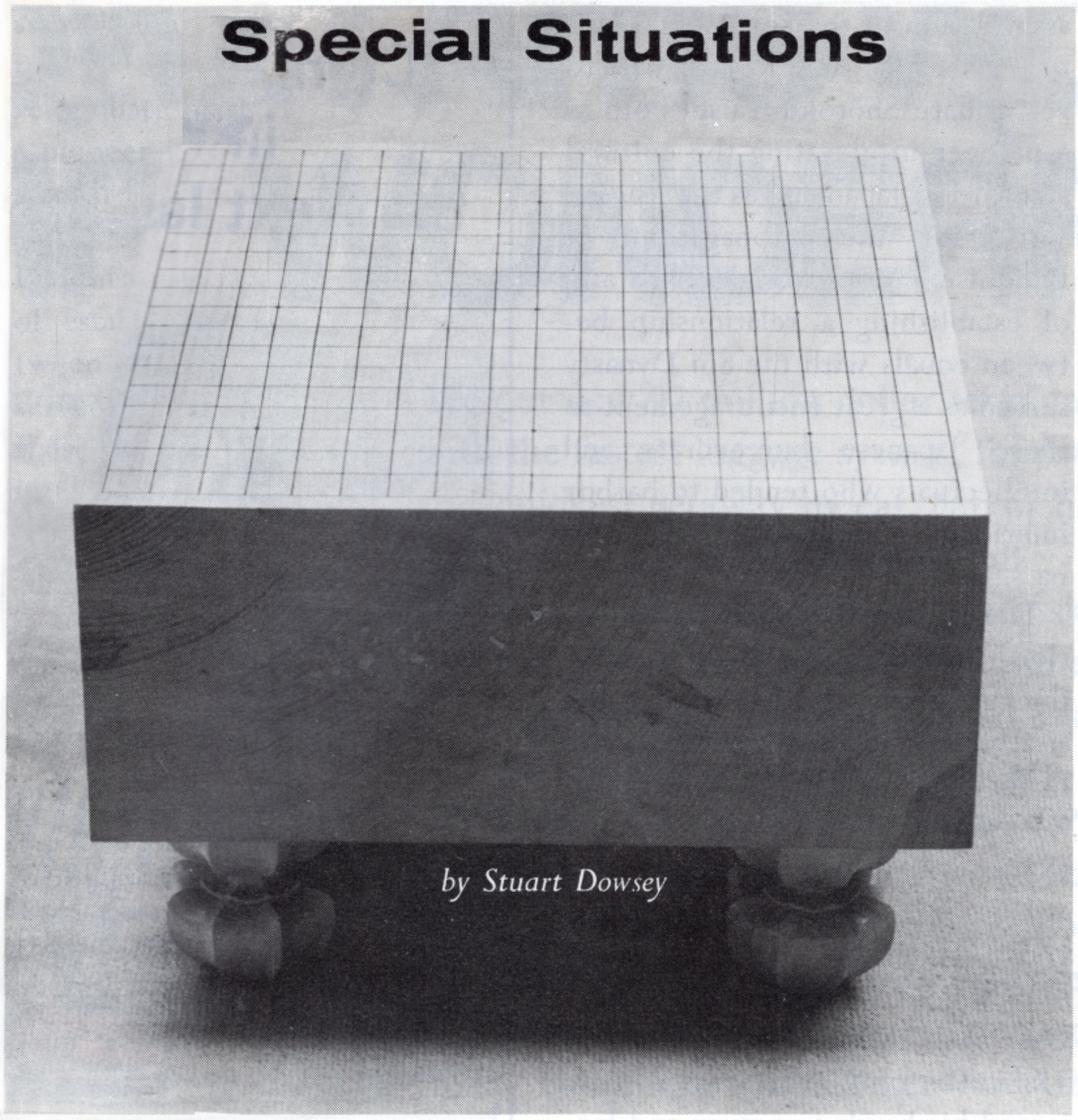
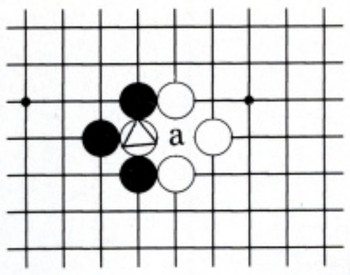


by Stuart Dowsey

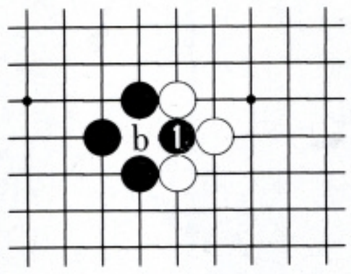
THE TWO BASIC rules of go are those of territory and of capture. The former is rather straightforward being the ultimate decisive factor while the latter is more complicated though it merely concerns specific configurations during play. The rule of capture adds a certain amount of excitement to the game and the two special extensions to that rule which we discuss next each provide distinctive flavor and variety of their own.

Ko: You can't play into an enemy eye unless you capture something in the process. This statement conceals some interesting possibilities. The most unusual of which is found in Dia. 1 and occurs in almost every game. Black can play into the White eye at 'a' to capture White △. This results in Dia. 2. Quick as flash, White notices that he can recapture Black 1 by playing at 'b'. Black is unmoved and calmly retakes playing at 1 again. At about this stage White gets hot under the collar and retakes the offending Black stone. Black retakes, White retakes and the whole sordid affair goes on for ever. Ad infinitum! Fortunately, the foregoing is only an illustration of how ridiculous the game would be if the mutual capturing sequence proceeded unchecked. In actual fact, recapture in this position, called ko, must first be preceded by a move elsewhere. If this other move contains a threat which must be answered immediately, the second player (in this case White) can then return to recapture the ko with 4 as in Dia. 3. The ko will end either when one player runs out of threats or when one player ignores a threat made elsewhere and connects the ko. To fill the ko, Black must play at △ or White at 'a' in Dia. 1.

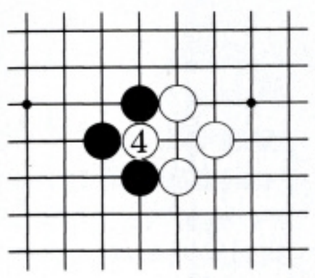
Whether to ignore a threat and win the ko will depend on it's value. Ko vary from the simple one-point dispute in Dias. 1, 2 and 3 to some quite large battles, even the life and death of a group may be at stake. Take Dia. 4 for example, three White stones on the left are cut off from their friends to the right but this disconnection was



Dia. 1



Dia. 2

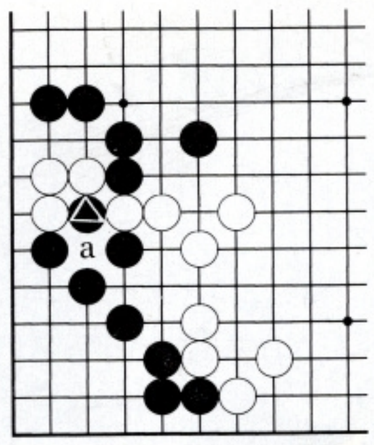


Dia. 3
② and ❸ elsewhere

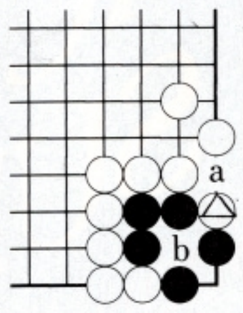
affected by a ko. If White captures Black ▲ at 'a' and goes on to win the ko and connect at ▲, he can save his stones. Of course, if Black connects at 'a', the three White stones are doomed and Black's left hand territory becomes quite large. This ko is ultimately worth more than 10 points to the winner and threats elsewhere must chosen in this light. In Dia. 5, the whole Black corner group is in the balance. Here the ko will end either with Black capturing at 'a' and connecting at △ to guarantee two eyes and life or with White playing at 'b' to kill the Black group. Once again the ko is worth more than 10 points.

Playing ko well takes much experience so the sooner you encounter one in actual play and try to play it out the faster will be your progress.

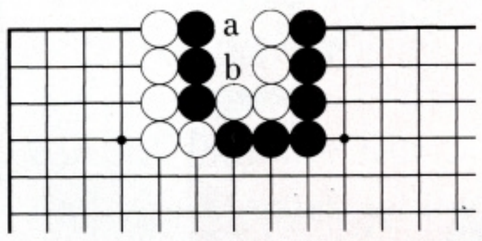
Seki: The second special case also



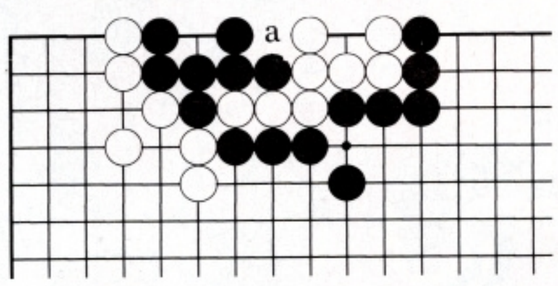
Dia. 4



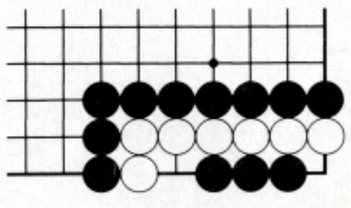
Dia. 5



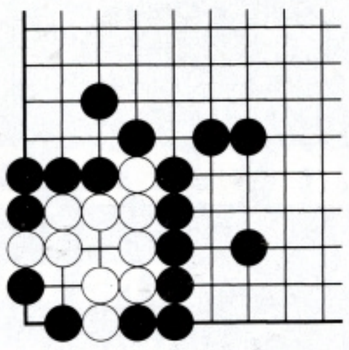
Dia. 6



Dia. 7



Dia. 8



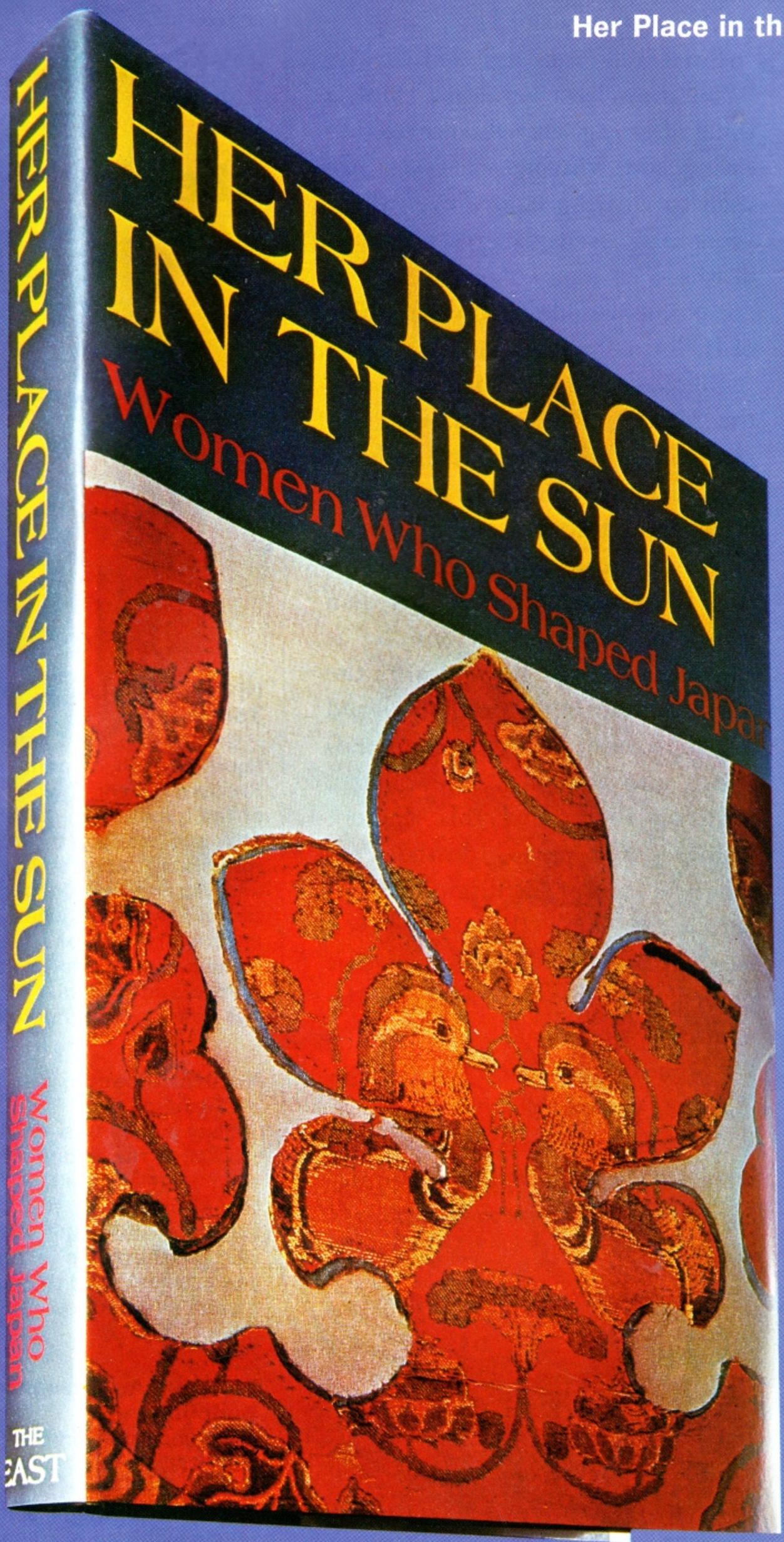
Dia. 9

has a Japanese name and is best described as an instance of stalemate in go. It is also an example of life without the prerequisite two eyes! Dia. 6 shows a simplified example of seki; three Black stones are enclosed by White stones and four White are enclosed by Black. It is a battle between both players to see who will capture first with the special difference that the remaining liberties 'a' and 'b' are shared by both. Each beleaguered group has two liberties thus when one plays inside (say at 'a') to capture with the next move, he has simultaneously reduced his own liberties to one and his opponent will graciously accept this unexpected windfall by capturing (at 'b'). In this case, whoever plays first will lose the fight and neither prefers to do so. The position is seki and contains no territory, remaining neutral even at the end of the game.

Seki may also involve one-eyed groups in contention as in Dia. 7. Now there is only one common liberty at 'a' but to play there would invite disaster as before. Dia. 8 shows a peculiar seki in which Black is surrounded by White is surrounded by Black. Black cannot play to capture White from inside. If he adds one stone in error, White will capture all four to create a position with four empty spaces in a row which is indubitably alive. Conversely White cannot attack because that invites immediate retribution. Finally we have the position in Dia. 9 to look at. Make sure in your own mind you understand that this is stalemated.

This article winds up the rules of the game. Starting with next month, we will consider various elementary tactical and strategic ideas. But you already know enough to play. Start at once, play as many games as you can and the following lessons will have more meaning. 東

Her Place in the Sun: Women Who Shaped Japan



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Okinawan Style White Fish Meat with Vinegared Miso

This is a very simple fish dish made with white fish meat that is steamed for a very short time, wrapped in chives, and served with vinegared *miso* (bean paste). In addition to the light taste of white fish, the chives give a fresh and crisp flavour. Mixed with vinegared *miso* are peanuts ground into powder, which add to it a special solid savour. Please choose fresh fish, so that you can appreciate its natural flavour. This dish is also an excellent accompaniment for saké.

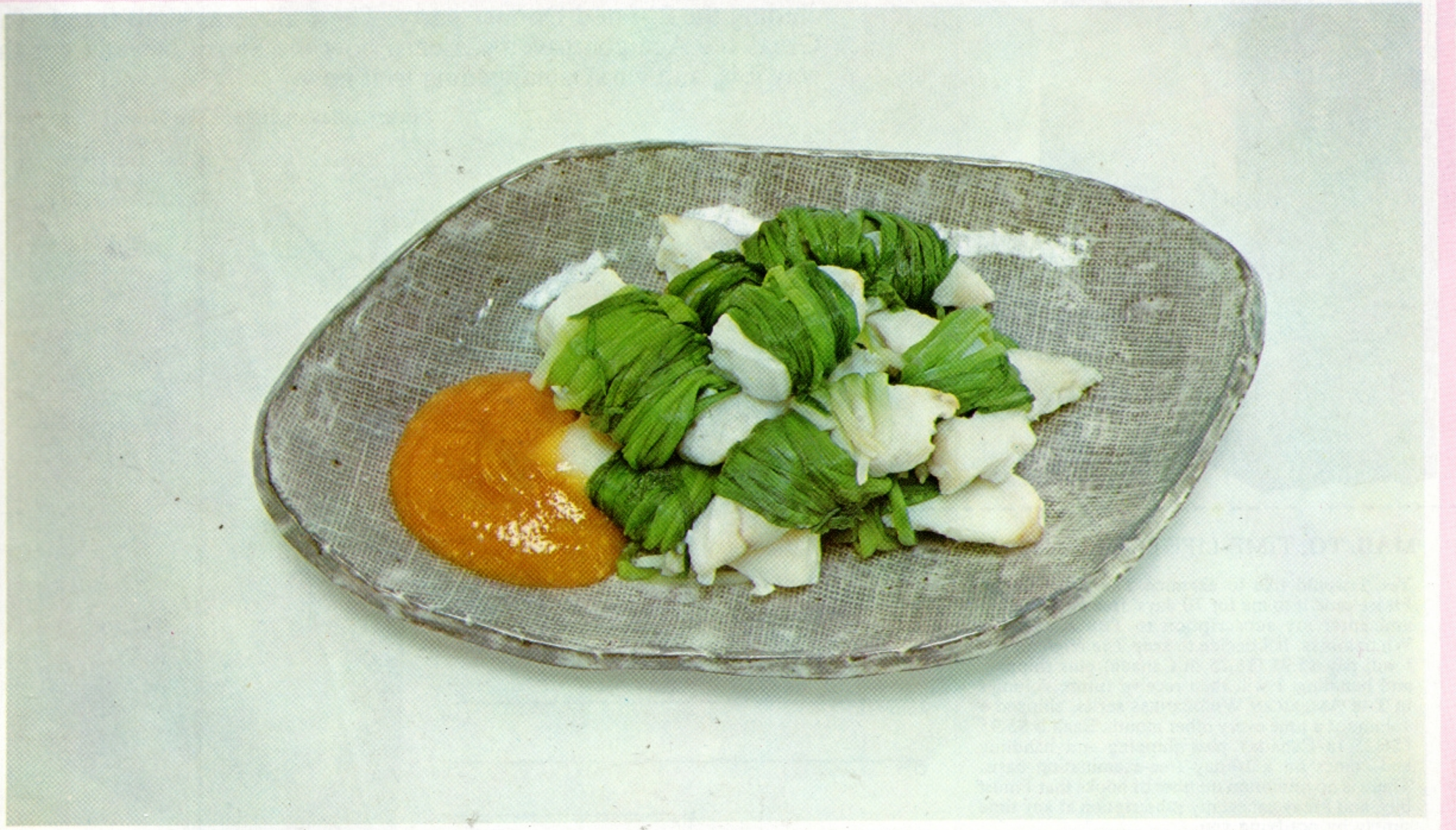
Ingredients (Serves Four)

300g white fish meat slices
½ bunch chives (or small stone-leek Vinegared *miso*
3 tablespoons parched peanuts
4 tablespoons sweet white *miso*
2 tablespoons vinegar
5–6 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon shōyu (soy sauce)
msg (*aji no moto*)

To Prepare:

1. Any fish such as flatfish, sea bream, and flying fish will do, if it is white fish meat. Cut the fish into slices about 5cm long and 1cm wide. You must be careful that the fish body does not come apart while cutting. Sprinkle fish with a dash of salt. Put a light coat of salad oil on a plate, on which slices of fish are to be placed, and then steam it over medium heat for 4–5 minutes.
2. Cut off the root of the chives. Boil the bunches of chives in hot water and dry. Wrap 4–5 bunches of such chives around sliced and steamed fish.
3. Chop peanuts fine with kitchen knife. Put them in earthenware mortar, and crush them further. Then in a mortar mix well: *miso*, vinegar, sugar, shōyu, and msg, and continue to bray until you have a thick vinegared *miso*.
4. Put the fish wrapped with chives on a serving plate, add vinegared *miso*, and serve. To the vinegared *miso* can be added white sesame or mustard, if you wish.

Helpful Hint: Do not steam the fish too long, or you will lose its special flavour. 東



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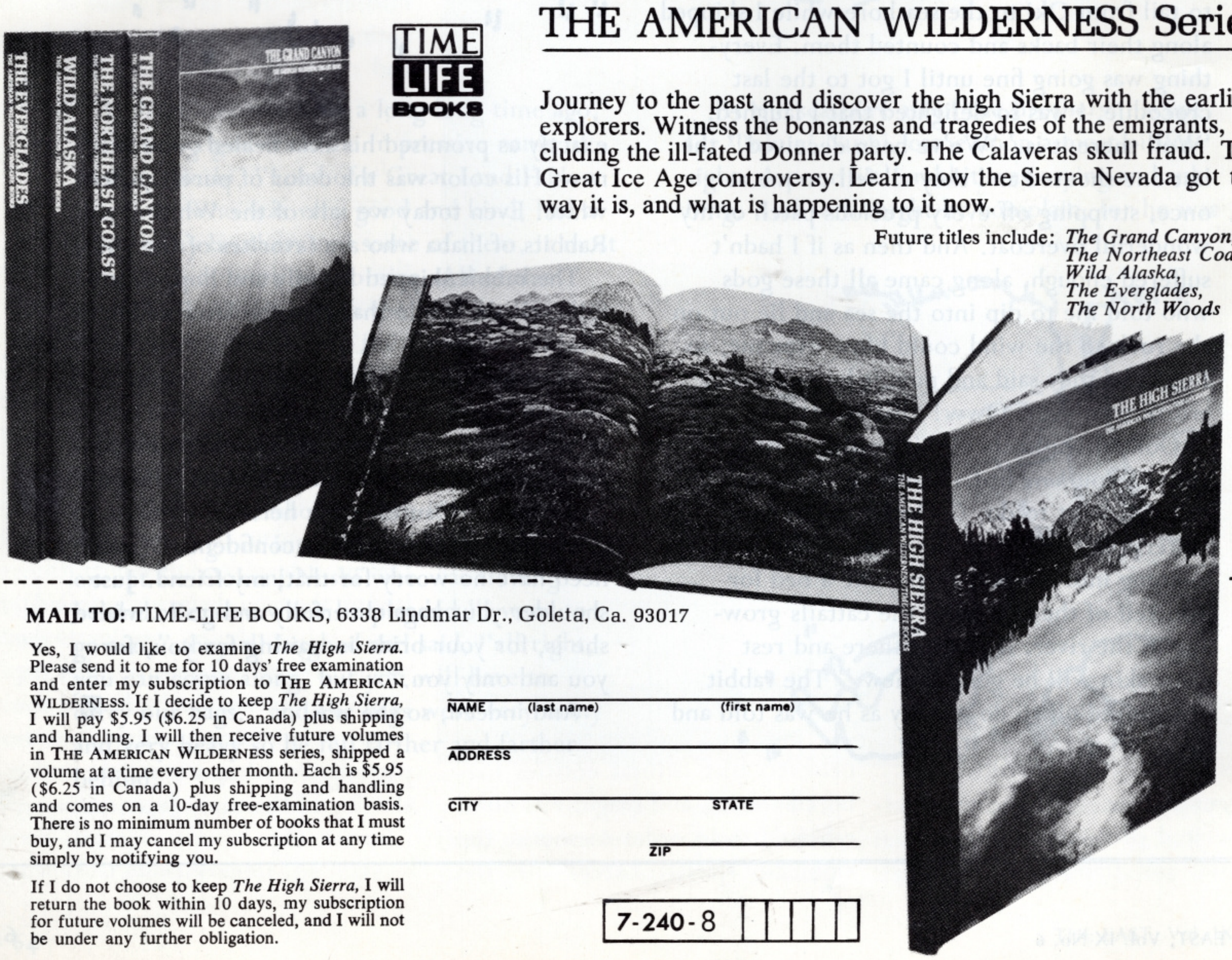

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